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A Dictionary of ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

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A DICTIONARY OF ADVAITA VEDĀNTA—
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PREFACE
(to the first edition)

Among the six systems of Indian philosophy, Vedānta the last, is the most well-known and widely studied. Based on the writings of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva, it has branched off into three major traditions which are very much alive even today.

Literature on the Advaita Vedānta is legion, thanks to the numerous descendants and defendants of the tradition. Among the simpler and more elementary treatises of Advaita, commonly called 'prakaraṇa-grantha,' the *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda is very popular. Being a later work, it has the advantage of systematizing all the important doctrines of the earlier works and presenting them in a comprehensive but compact way.

This dictionary has been prepared, drawing heavily from the *Vedāntasāra*. But, to understand the terms given here, some background is needed. This has been provided in the two essays given in part one. The first essay, *The Advaita Vedānta Darśana*, gives a brief history of the school and presents its essential teachings, including the later ramifications, in a nutshell. The second essay, *Sadānanda's Vedāntasāra*, summarises the salient features of this work. The dictionary itself is given in part two.

Part three contains ten charts which give in a condensed form all the essential information of Advaita Vedānta as depicted in the *Vedāntasāra*. This can serve as a revision lesson to the students of Advaita.

We earnestly hope that this brief work will serve as a useful introduction to the students of Advaita Vedānta. If it prompts some scholars to venture on a much bigger work, we will feel blessed.

S. H.

PREFACE
(to the second edition)

The first edition brought out in December 1990 has been well-received by the students of Vedānta. Since it had been based entirely on the *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda, many important terms and words commonly used in the Advaita Vedānta literature, but not found in that book, had been omitted from its purview. Considering this as a lacuna and with a view to expanding its scope so that it proves to be more useful to the serious students of Vedānta, the work has now been expanded by adding a little more than seventy new items. The arrangement of the subject matter has also been altered to bring it in consonance with the title of the work.

We trust that this enlarged edition will be welcomed even more.

1-4-1995 **S. H.**

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Key to Transliteration and Pronunciation

	Sounds like		*Sounds like*
अ	a-o in son	ठ	ṭh-th in ant-hill
आ	ā-a in master	ड	ḍ-d in den
इ	i-i in if	ढ	ḍh-dh in godhood
ई	ī-ee in feel	ण	ṇ-n in under
उ	u-u in full	त	t-t in French
ऊ	ū-oo in boot	थ	th-th in thumb
ऋ	ṛ-somewhat between r and ri	द	d-th in then
		ध	dh-the in breathe
ए	e-ay in May	न	n-n in not
ऐ	ai-y in my	प	p-p in pen
ओ	o-o in oh	फ	ph-ph in loop-hole
औ	au-ow in now	ब	b-b in bag
क	k-k in keen	भ	bh-bh in abhor
ख	kh-ckh in blockhead	म	m-m in mother
ग	g-g (hard) in go	य	y-y in yard
घ	gh-gh in log-hut	र	r-r in run
ङ	ṅ-ng in singer	ल	l-l in luck
च	c-ch in chain	व	v-v in avert
छ	ch-chh in catch him	श	ś-sh in reich (German)
ज	j-j in judge	ष	ṣ-sh in show
झ	jh-dgeh in hedgehog	स	s-in sun
ञ	ñ-n (somewhat) as in French	ह	h-in hot
		ं	ṁ-m in sum
ट	ṭ-t in ten	ः	ḥ-h in half

INTRODUCTION

ADVAITA VEDĀNTA DARŚANA

PREAMBLE

Man is often described as a rational animal. Once the animal in him is reasonably satisfied by the provision of basic biological and some psychological needs, the rational part gets an opportunity to evolve to higher levels. Philosophy, including metaphysics, is one of the highest aspects of this evolution.

DARŚANAS

The Indian philosophical systems have developed not only as a result of intellectual speculation but also of mystical intuition. Hence the name 'darśana' (lit., 'seeing'), usually applied to them. The topics most commonly discussed by these darśanas are generally four: (a) nature of the physical world, its origin and evolution; (b) nature of man and other living beings; (c) existence of God, his nature and attributes; (d) the goal of human life and the way of attaining it.

Different standpoints and differing views of these topics of discussion have naturally led to a variety of schools. These schools are broadly divided into two classes: the āstika and the nāstika. The former accept the authority of the Vedas whereas the latter do not.

VEDĀNTA DARŚANA

The Vedānta Darśana is the last of the former schools but has gained the most important place among them. A judicious combination of reasoning and acceptance of the authority of the Vedas, as also a long unbroken tradition, are responsible for its gaining the prominent place.

Though the 'prasthānatraya' ('the three great paths') viz., the Upaniṣads, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, are the basis of the Vedānta Darśana, it is the *Brahmasūtras* (also called *Vedāntasūtras* and *Śārīrakasūtras*) of Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsa that occupies the key position. The sūtras (aphorisms) being quite terse and often ambiguous, have naturally led to widely differing interpretations, resulting in the three well-known systems of Vedānta viz., Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita.

The word 'Vedānta' itself means the 'end or the essence of the Vedas.' It is the Upaniṣads that mainly comprise the Vedānta since they normally form the last part of the Vedic literature and contain the quintessence of their teaching.

ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

The Advaita Vedānta Darśana owes its systematisation as a formidable doctrine, to Gauḍapāda (7th-8th cent. A.D.) who wrote his famous *Kārikās* on the *Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad*, and Śaṅkara (A.D. 788-820).

Śaṅkara's commentaries on the Prasthānatraya as also a few independent treatises form the bedrock on which the later Advaitins built their edifices.

Brahman, the only Reality

'Advaita' means 'non-dual,' 'one without a second'. The system derives this nomenclature from the fact that it recognises Brahman (the Absolute) as the only reality and denies permanent reality to the world as also to the individual souls.

The entire edifice of Advaita metaphysics is built upon the foundation that Brahman is the only reality, 'brahma satyam.' This premise is based firmly on the famous Upaniṣadic statement 'sadeva somya idamagra āsīt, ekamevādvitīyam,' 'Dear (Śvetaketu), in the beginning (before creation) Reality (or Brahman) alone existed, the one without a second' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1).

Anirvacanīya Khyāti

However, the world of multiplicity is a matter of our day-to-day experience. Hence it becomes necessary to offer an explanation as to how Brahman, the one without a second, appears as this world of multiple names and forms. The explanation offered by Advaita is *anirvacanīyakhyāti*, its theory of erroneous cognition, which defies logic. Perceiving silver in nacre in moonlight or a snake in a rope in insufficient light are the stock examples given by the

Advaitins. In both cases there is an erroneous perception brought about by the impression of silver and snake from an earlier idea of the same, now superimposed upon nacre and rope under conditions favourable to the error. This superimposition called 'adhyāsa' or 'adhyāropa,' is responsible for the mithyājñāna (false knowledge) that the object perceived is silver or snake.

The silver or the snake perceived is neither 'sat' (real) nor 'asat' (unreal). It is not 'asat' or unreal like 'the son of a barren woman' since it is actually perceived. Neither is it 'sat' or real since it disappears as soon as the substratum (the nacre or the rope) is perceived as it is. To explain such a peculiar phenomenon Śaṅkara creates, out of logical necessity, a third type of perceived objects which is 'sad-asad-vilakṣaṇa' (different from both the real and the unreal). The 'khyāti' or the cognition itself is described as 'anirvacanīya,' incapable of any precise definition or description.

Ajñāna or Avidyā

The basic cause of this erroneous perception is termed as ajñāna or avidyā (ignorance) which is said to be bhāvarūpa (existent) and is endowed with two śaktis or powers viz., 'āvaraṇaśakti' (veiling power) and 'vikṣepaśakti' (transforming power). It veils the true nature of nacre and rope, and shows up silver and snake in their place by apparently transforming

them. Such an apparently transformed object is called a 'vivarta' of the original and the theory that propounds this is known as *Vivartavāda*. Since this avidyā does not make the nacre and the rope completely disappear from view, but only makes them appear as something else, it is described as 'bhāvarūpa' or existent.

Māyā

An attempt may now be made to explain how this world of duality has evolved out of the nondual Reality called Brahman in the Upaniṣads. The world of duality can be broadly divided into 'dṛk' (the seer) and 'dṛśya' (the seen). Both these, again, are divided into the innumerable living beings (jīvas) and countless objects of creation. How does Brahman the Absolute, the one without a second, the indivisible Reality, appear divided into innumerable beings on the one side and countless objects on the other? It is avidyā that causes the one Ātman (the Self)—incidentally, the Upaniṣads use both words, Āman and Brahman, to indicate the same Reality—appear as many jīvas and it is māyā that causes the world of phenomena. Māyā is avidyā at the cosmic level.

Three Degrees of Reality

Śaṅkara accepts three degrees of reality. The first, known as 'prātibhāsika-satya' (apparent truth,

illusory appearance) is illustrated in the wrong perception of silver in nacre or a snake in a rope. The second, called 'vyāvahārika-satya' is illustrated by this world of our day-to-day experience. This world appearance has a much higher degree of reality and lasts till one gets ātmajñāna or brahmajñāna, realization of Truth. It is satya or true for all purposes of vyavahāra i.e., day-to-day existence or practical life. The third, designated as 'pāramārthika-satya,' is the highest Truth and the only truth that really exists. It is Brahman or Ātman, which is nirguṇa (without attributes) and nirākāra (without forms), hence incapable of being described except in a negative way ('neti, neti'—'not this, not this').

Creation

Brahman associated with māyā is Saguṇa Brahman (Brahman with attributes) or Īśvara (Lord of creation, God). It is this aspect of Brahman that is responsible for creation, preservation and destruction of the world. As for the actual order of evolution of the created world, the descriptions given in the Upaniṣads are accepted.

For Śaṅkara who holds that the world process is only a vivarta (illusory appearance) due to adhyāsa (superimposition on Brahman), the very attempt to describe the various steps of evolution is a futile exercise. However, since the śruti (revealed scripture,

the Upaniṣads) has done so, a place of honour must somehow be accorded to it. So he characterises such descriptions as giving 'taṭasthalakṣaṇa' (accidental or casual characteristics) of Brahman helping us to be directed towards it, even as the branch of a tree helps us to locate the crescent in the sky. On the other hand, Brahman as it is, can be comprehended only through its 'svarūpalakṣaṇa' (integral or essential characteristics), which is 'sat-cit-ānanda.' 'Sat' (eternal reality), 'cit' (pure consciousness), and 'ānanda' (unalloyed bliss) are not really its characteristics but its very essence.

Jīva

This Brahman or Ātman which is sat-cit-ānanda, has inexplicably got itself involved in the body-mind complex, the involvement being due to avidyā. Since the origin of this involvement can never be logically or satisfactorily explained, avidyā is stated to be anādi or beginningless. The involved Ātman is designated as 'jīva.'

This jīva, the Ātman in bondage, has five kośas or sheaths, three śarīras or bodies, performs actions motivated by desires, experiences pleasure and pain due to karma and undergoes transmigration until liberation. Śaṅkara declares that this jīva, when shorn of its upādhis or limiting adjuncts like the body and the mind, is identical with Brahman, since its essential nature also is sat-cit-ānanda.

Sādhanas and Mukti

The main trouble with the Ātman become jīva is the tādātmya or false identification with the mind and the body, brought about by adhyāropa or adhyāsa (superimposition). Hence the only way of remedying it is by apavāda or desuperimposition, by denying this identification. For this, one has first to prepare oneself by the preliminary fourfold discipline or sādhanacatuṣṭaya viz., viveka (discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal), vairāgya (dispassion), śamādiṣaṭka (cultivation of the six virtues like self-control) and mumukṣutva (desire for liberation). Then one has to approach a competent guru (spiritual preceptor) and learn the truth from him by śravaṇa (hearing), manana (reflection) and nididhyāsana (contemplation). The most important part of the guru's teaching will be in the form of 'mahāvākyās' (great sentences) like *'tat tvam asi'* (That thou art') or *'aham brahmāsmi'* ('I am Brahman'). Śravaṇa and manana produce the deeprooted conviction that one is the spirit. Hence in nididhyāsana, desuperimposition in the form of 'I am not the body, nor the sense-organs, nor the mind, nor even the ego' and so on, can be practised leading ultimately to the realization that one is the Ātman. This realization resulting in mukti or liberation can be had even while one is living in this body. It is known as 'jīvanmukti.' He will attain 'videhamukti' (liberation from future bodies) after the

body falls off, the continuance of the body between the two states being due to prārabdha-karma (actions that have caused this body).

Mukti or liberation from transmigration is not the gaining of a new state but recognising the already existing original state.

Jīvanmukti and Videhamukti

Two kinds of mukti—jīvanmukti and videhamukti—are envisaged in the advaitic works. The Vivaraṇa school* upholds the theory that mukti is simultaneous with jñāna. Hence Jīvanmukti is not only possible, but the only mukti that can be recognised. Continuance of the body for some more time, due to prārabdhakarma, has no effect upon jñāna. On the other hand, the Bhāmatī school* holds that even after jñāna, if the body continues due to prārabdhakarma, this imposes a limitation, thereby implying the existence of a trace of avidyā. The death of the body puts an end even to this trace of avidyā and real mukti is obtained then. Since this comes after the death of the body, it is called 'Videhamukti'.

Locus of Avidyā

A favourite topic of discussion that frequently crops up in Advaita metaphysical works is the locus

* The terms 'Vivaraṇaprasthāna' and 'Bhāmatīprasthāna' have been explained later.

of avidyā. Since Brahman is the only reality that exists, it alone is the āśraya (locus) as also the viṣaya (object) of avidyā. This is one school. Sureśvara and Padmapāda are the main protagonists of this school. According to them, avidyā is one only.

Since Brahman is pure consciousness, avidyā can never exist in It nor act on It. This is the opposing school propagated by Vācaspati Miśra. For him, the jīvas are the locii of avidyā and there is one avidyā for every jīva.

POST-ŚAṄKARA ADVAITA

Though Śaṅkara wrote profusely, clearly enunciating the main doctrines of his school, there are certain places in his writings wherein the important aspects of certain doctrines are either vague or are capable of more than one interpretation. This has naturally, resulted in the growth of quite a voluminous post-Śaṅkara Advaita literature leading to different prasthānas or schools of thought. 'Vārttika-prasthāna' of Sureśvara (9th cent. A.D.) comes first in the series. This school gets its designation from the exposition contained in the 'vārttikās' or commentaries in verse, of Sureśvara on Śaṅkara's bhāṣyas on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Taittirīya* Upaniṣads. According to this school, Brahman is the material cause of this world, and not māyā. The locus of avidyā is Brahman and not the jīvas. Avidyā is one only and not many. The

mahāvākyas or the great Vedic dictums are capable of producing immediate cognition of the self as Brahman. Hence dhyānābhyāsa or practice of meditation on the meaning of those dictums is not necessary. The jīvas are but ābhāsas or appearances of Brahman in the individual minds. (This has earned the theory, the designation of 'ābhāsavāda' as opposed to 'pratibimbavāda' and 'avacchedavāda' of other schools.)

The 'Vivaraṇaprasthāna' of Padmapāda (9th cent. A.D.) and Prakāśātman (A.D. 1200) comes next. The name is derived from the work *Pañca-pādikāvivaraṇa* of the latter, it being a voluminous commentary on the *Pañcapādikā* of Padmapāda. Though this name suggests that it covers five pādas or sections of the *Brahmasūtras*, only the commentary on the first four sūtras is now available. The chief doctrines of this school are: Avidyā is a jaḍatmikā śakti (a force of material nature) and is the material cause of this world. It is bhāvarūpa, a positive entity, but not real. Māyā, prakṛti, avyakta, avyākṛta, tamas, śakti etc., are all its synonyms. It is called avidyā when āvaraṇa power is predominant and māyā when vikṣepa power becomes dominant. Alternatively, it is māyā at the cosmic level and avidyā at the individual level. Avidyā rests on Brahman but acts on the jīvas. The jīvas are pratibimbas or reflections of Brahman in the antaḥkaraṇa (mind). The reflected images have no reality other than that of the original (bimba)

Brahman. This theory is called 'pratibimba-vāda' as contrasted with 'ābhāsavāda.'

The 'Bhāmatīprasthāna' of Vācaspati Miśra (A.D. 840) is the third and the last of these major schools. *Bhāmatī* is his celebrated commentary on the Śāṅkarabhāṣya of *Brahmasūtras*. This school is built round the *Bhāmatī* along with its subsidiary commentaries the *Kalpataru* of Amalānanda (13th cent. A.D.) and the *Parimalā* of Appayya Dīkṣita (16th cent. A.D.). The views of this school can be briefly summarised as follows: Brahman is the material cause of the world, not as the locus of avidyā but as the object of avidyās supported by the jīvas. Māyā is only an accessory cause. Avidyā cannot abide in Brahman. It abides in the jīvas and is plural since the jīvas are plural. Vācaspati advocates two varieties of avidyā: the mūlāvidyā or kāraṇāvidyā (primal nescience); the tūlāvidyā or kāryāvidyā (derivative nescience). It is the latter that is responsible for bhramasaṁskāras or error impressions. Also, Vācaspati appears more inclined towards the 'avacchedavāda' or the theory of limitation with regard to the appearance of the jīvas. Just as a pot limits the infinite sky in itself, avidyā of the individual limits Brahman and makes it appear like a jīva. Another point of importance in this school is that the mahāvākyas do not produce anubhava (immediate cognition). It is the mind seasoned by meditation that gives such experience.

Mention may also be made here of 'dṛṣṭisṛṣṭivāda' which advocates that the world is created simultaneously with its perception, and, 'ekajīvavāda,' which propounds that there is only one jīva which is in bondage and when it gets liberation, everything else disappears. Prakāśānanda (15th-16th cent. A.D.) is the chief exponent of these schools.

Advaita was subjected to continuous criticism by other Vedāntic schools as also the Buddhists and hence the growth of polemical literature became inevitable. Mention must be made of two most important works of this type: the *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khādya* of Śrīharṣa (12th cent. A.D.) and the *Advaitasiddhi* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (16th cent. A.D.).

CONCLUSION

It should be said to the credit of Advaita Vedānta that even now it is attracting the respectful attention from scholars of the highest calibre, both Eastern and Western.

A DICTIONARY OF ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

A

ābhāsavāda ('the theory that [the jīva is] appearance [of Brahman]'):

The Advaita Vedānta which posits Brahman, the Absolute, as the only Reality, the one without a second (= advaita) raises two interesting questions:

(a) The locus of avidyā or nescience;

(b) The real nature of the jīva or the individual soul.

According to Sureśvara (9th cent. A.D.) whose school of thought is called 'Vārttika-prasthāna', the jīvas or individual souls are 'ābhāsas' or appearances of Brahman in the individual minds. This theory is hence called 'ābhāsavāda'.

As for the locus of avidyā, it is Brahman, but it acts on the jīvas.

abhyāsa ('repetition'):

It is repetition of either the words or the idea in order to get it fixed in the mind. This is one of the six characteristic signs (ṣaḍvidhaliṅga) by which the purport of Vedāntic texts is to be determined.

adhikaraṇa ('substratum'):

The word is generally used in two senses: ādhāra

or substratum, like a lotus, in which qualities like redness or sweet smell inhere. It can also mean a topic of discussion, as for instance, in terms such as *Viyadadhikaraṇa* (3.1.1-7) or *Ākāśādhikaraṇa* (1.1.22) appearing in the *Brahmasūtras*. It should normally consist of five items: viṣaya (topic), saṁśaya (doubt), pūrvapakṣa (*prima facie* view), uttara (reply) and siddhānta (final conclusion). Works like the *Brahmasūtras* consist of several adhikaraṇas.

adhikārin ('competent student'):

The word denotes any person who is competent and hence eligible to study an art or a science. The adhikārin of Vedānta should have purified his mind through the performance of his ordained duties and adopted the sādhana-catuṣṭaya or the four sādhanās or means to illumination.

adhiṣṭhāna ('the supporting basis'):

The ground or a basic object upon which something else is wrongly superimposed is called 'adhiṣṭhana'. For instance, when silver or a snake is superimposed on nacre or a rope in insufficient light, the nacre and the rope are termed as 'adhiṣṭhāna,' the ground which forms the basis for the superimposition.

adhyāropa, adhyāsa

See **anirvacanīyakhyāti.**

advaita ('the one without a second'):

'Advaita' means 'non-dual,' 'one without a second'. The system of Vedānta as propounded by Śaṅkara (A.D. 788-820) derives this nomenclature from the fact that it recognizes Brahman, the Absolute, as the only reality and denies permanent existence to the world as also to the individual souls.

āgāmī-karma ('karma that is done in future'):

See **karma.**

agni ('fire'):

It is the element of fire, third in the series of evolution from Brahman-Ātman associated with ajñāna and commencing with ākāśa. In the primordial state it is called 'tejas' with the quality of 'rūpa' or form and is one of the five tanmātras or primordial elements. In the gross state, as one of the pañcamahābhūtas or five basic, but compounded, elements, it comprises the other four elements also, due to pañcīkaraṇa or quintuplication. Its sattva element gives rise to the organ of sight or the eyes and the rajas element to the organs of locomotion or the feet.

ahaṅkāra ('egoism'):

It is one of the four aspects of the antaḥkaraṇa or the internal organ. Normally translated as 'egoism,' it is that aspect of the mind which gives the sense of individuality. It is a product of the sattva-part of the five tanmātras or primordial elements.

ahiṁsā ('non-injury'):

Non-injury or non-violence to life is one of the five cardinal moral principles listed under yama (restraint), the first of the eight steps of Yoga leading to samādhi or complete absorption.

ajahad-lakṣaṇā ('non-giving-up-implication'):

Also spelt as 'ajahallakṣaṇā,' it is the second of a series of three lakṣaṇās or meaning by implication. Here, the direct meaning of a statement is not wholly given up but hints at something else, as in the sentence 'Red colour is running' which actually means 'Red horse is running.'

See also **artha** and **lakṣaṇā.**

ajñāna ('nescience or ignorance'):

In Vedānta, ajñāna does not mean just ignorance or absence of knowledge but a 'positive something' responsible for conscious activities pertaining to all fields except that of the knowledge of the unity of jīva, the individual soul, with Brahman. It is the equivalent of pradhāna or prakṛti of Sāṅkhya philosophy and hence comprises the three guṇas, sattva, rajas and tamas, the permutation and combination of which give rise to this creation.

However, it is destroyed by jñāna, knowledge of the ultimate unity of the individual soul with Brahman.

ākāśa (ether):

Ākāśa is the tanmātra or the primordial element of ether, the first evolute of Brahman-Ātman, associated with ajñāna or nescience. Its basic quality is śabda or sound because it is the basis for the production of all sounds or vibrations. In the process of evolution of the universe, its sattva-aspect produces the organ of hearing or śrotra (the ear) and rajas-aspect gives rise to the organ of speech or vāk. The sky or space is its gross manifestation and is the product of pañcīkaraṇa or quintuplication. It is also called as one of the pañcamahābhūtas (five basic, compounded, elements).

ānanda ('bliss'):

As long as the jīva or the individual soul is enmeshed in the body-mind complex, it is subject to pleasure and pain and can never get unalloyed bliss. When it is able to get rid of its ajñāna or ignorance of its real nature through jñāna or knowledge by practising preliminary disciplines like the sādhana-catuṣṭaya and approaching a qualified guru or preceptor for the final instructions, it attains unalloyed bliss called 'ānanda'. Sometimes ānanda is defined as the total and permanent absence of sorrow and misery.

ānandamayakośa ('the bliss-sheath'):

One of the five sheaths, the pañcakośas, it gets its name due to the experience of joy in suṣupti or deep sleep. In content, it is identical with ajñāna or nescience. Since it makes the jīva, the individual soul, forget his nature as pure 'caitanya' or consciousness, by covering it as it were, like a kośa or sheath, it is termed as a 'kośa.' It clings to the soul till the state of liberation.

See also **pañcakośas.**

aṇḍaja ('born of the egg'):

It is one of the four types of bodies of living beings produced during the evolution of the universe. Birds and reptiles belong to this group.

anirvacanīya ('indescribable'):

Ajñāna or nescience is said to be anirvacanīya or indescribable since it cannot be described in any way. The reason is that it cannot fit into any of the known patterns in this creation which have been successfully described, such as 'sat' or existing and 'asat' or non-existing.

anirvacanīyakhyāti ('cognition that defies explanation'):

Khyāti or cognition is one of the important topics discussed by the darśanas or Indian philosophical

systems. Out of the several khyātis or theories of cognition, the 'anirvacanīyakhyāti' is one that has been propagated by the Advaita Vedānta. Perceiving silver in nacre or a snake in a rope are the stock examples given. In both cases there is an erroneous cognition brought about by the impressions of silver and snake from an earlier idea of the same, now superimposed upon nacre and rope under conditions favourable to the error. This superimposition called 'adhyāsa' or 'adhyāropa' is responsible for the 'mithyājñāna' or erroneous cognition.

annamayakośa ('the food-sheath'):

It is the physical body born out of anna or food and nourished by food. Like a kośa or sheath, it covers the self and prevents the experience of its true nature. It is the first of the five such kośas (pañcakośas). It is destroyed at death. It is also called sthūla-śarīra or the gross body, the first of a series of three śarīras.

See also **pañcakośas.**

antaḥkaraṇa ('the internal organ'):

It is the internal organ or instrument by which we experience thinking, feeling and willing and are able to remember things. Though sometimes loosely called as mind (manas) or intellect (buddhi), it is more basic, of which these two are only aspects. Citta (mind-stuff) and ahaṅkāra (egoism) are two more

aspects, making four in all. It is the product of the combined sattva aspect of the five tanmātras or primordial elements.

antaryāmin ('the inner controller'):

The word denotes one of the aspects of Īśvara or God, as the all-pervading principle and hence the controller from within.

See also **Īśvara.**

anubandha-catuṣṭaya ('four preliminaries'):

In the traditional Sanskrit treatises on any art or science (especially Vedānta), four preliminaries are stated in the very beginning: adhikārin or competent student, viṣaya or subject-matter, sambandha or connection and prayojana or utility. See under each title for details.

anumāna ('inference'):

Anumāna or inference is one of the three basic means of attaining knowledge, the other two being pratyakṣa (direct perception) and āgama (scriptural testimony). Since fire and smoke are invariably associated with each other, we can infer the existence of fire at a distance—say on a hill—by just seeing smoke arising out there. This is an oft-quoted example for anumāna.

anupalabdhi ('non-perception'):

The Mīmāṁsā system of philosophy generally accepts six sources of knowledge of which anupalabdhi or non-perception is the last. When we do not perceive a jar on the table in front of us we come to *know* that it *does not exist* there. Thus it is a negative means of knowledge.

apāna ('breathing out'):

It is one of the five prāṇas (pañcaprāṇas) or vital airs responsible for the functioning of the organs of excretion, and rooted in the same, as well as the organs of generation. The five prāṇas are produced out of the rajas-aspect of the tanmātras or primordial elements.

See also **pañcaprāṇas.**

aparigraha ('non-acceptance'):

Aparigraha or non-acceptance of gifts from others is one of the five basic moral disciplines under yama, which itself is the first of the eight steps of Yoga given by Patañjali in his *Yoga-sutras,* a treatise on Rājayoga. Vedānta has accepted these steps as aids to samādhi or total absorption in the spiritual ideal.

āpas ('water'):

It is the fourth of the five tanmātras or primordial elements, characterised by rasa or taste and hence

known as 'rasatanmātra' also. In its gross state as one of the five bhūtas (pañcamahābhūtās) it contains traces of the other four elements also due to undergoing the process of pañcīkaraṇa or quintuplication. In the process of creation its sattva-aspect produces the organ of taste, rasanendriya or jihvā, the tongue. Its rajas-aspect generates the organs of excretion.

apavāda ('desuperimposition'):

The words 'adhyāropa' (superimposition) and 'apavāda' (desuperimposition) invariably go together in the Advaita Vedānta. In semi-darkness, there is the 'adhyāropa' of the snake on the rope. Through right perception under the right circumstances (for eg., bright light) there is 'apavāda' or desuperimposition of the snake which is now sublated and its substratum, the rope, is seen as it is. Thus 'apavāda' is removing the erroneous perception through right knowledge.

apūrvatā ('the quality of not being known before'):

This is the third of a series of six characteristic signs (ṣaḍvidha-liṅgas) by which the purport of a Vedāntic text is ascertained. The text should reveal something which has not been known before (apūrva) for the first time; for instance, the revelation of Brahman by the Vedas. The word apūrvatā is sometimes translated as 'originality' also.

artha ('meaning'):

In the study of Vedāntic texts, getting at the 'artha' or correct meaning and interpretation, is very essential. Three ways of determining the meaning are normally accepted: vācyārtha or direct meaning, vyaṅgyārtha or suggested meaning and lakṣyārtha or implied meaning. See for details under the respective heads.

arthāpatti ('postulation'):

'Arthāpatti' is one of the six methods of obtaining knowledge according to the Mīmāṁsā philosophy, accepted by the Advaita Vedānta also. It is described as the necessary supposition of an unperceived fact which *alone* can explain a phenomenon that demands an explanation. If a person is fasting during the day and yet is growing fat, we are forced to conclude that he is eating at night. This postulation is 'arthāpatti'.

arthavāda ('eulogy'):

It is the fifth among the ṣaḍvidha-liṅgas or the six characteristic signs which aid in determining the correct purport of Vedic sentences. Eulogy usually recommends an injunction by stating the good arising from its observance or the evil accruing by its violation. The Mīmāṁsā texts list several varieties of the same.

āsana ('posture'):

Third in the series of the eight limbs prescribed in the books on Yoga, āsana is the correct posture for practising meditation, the posture which can be maintained comfortably for a pretty length of time. Vedānta accepts it as a part of nididhyāsana, meditation on the Ātman or Brahman.

asat ('the unreal'):

The word is used in several senses:

(a) Something that does not exist, like the horns of a hare;

(b) Something which is constantly changing as a result of deśa (place), kāla (time) and nimitta (causation), an impermanent object;

(c) The unmanifested, causal, state of a manifested object. For instance this world existed as 'asat' before manifesting itself through names and forms.

asteya ('non-stealing'):

Asteya or non-stealing means not taking anything that does not lawfully belong to one. It is a cardinal moral principal listed as the third in a series of five under yama, the first step of Yoga.

āstika ('one [who believes] in the authority of [the Vedas]'):

Generally the words 'āstika' and 'nāstika' are

applied to persons who believe in the existence of God and life after death, and, those who do not. However, in the darśanas or philosophical systems, they are applied to those schools that accept or do not accept the authority of the Śrutis or the Vedas. Hence, the ṣaḍ-darśanas or the six systems come under the first category whereas the Cārvāka, the Jaina and the Bauddha systems come under the second.

ātman ('the Self'):

The Upaniṣads affirm that Brahman the Absolute, the One without a second, is the only Reality which appears to be divided into innumerable beings on the one side and countless objects on the other. Though the word Ātman is often used as a synonym of Brahman, it is more commonly used to indicate the individual self, the essential nature of the jīvātman. Ultimately it is also sat-cit-ānanda, or existence-knowledge-bliss absolute

avacchedavāda ('the theory [that the jīva is an apparent] limitation [of Brahman]'):

The nature of the jīva or the individual soul and its relationship with Brahman is one of the oft-discussed topics in post-Śaṅkara advaita. 'Avacchedavāda' is the theory of limitation with regard to the appearance of the jīvas. Just as a pot apparently limits the infinite sky in itself, avidyā or nescience

of the individual limits Brahman and makes it appear like a jīva. This theory is propounded by Vācaspati Miśra (A.D. 840) and is called Bhāmatī-prasthāna.

āvaraṇa (covering):

Ajñāna or nescience, also called ignorance, has two powers, that of āvaraṇa or covering the true nature of a thing and vikṣepa or projecting something else in its place.

avasthā ('state'):

In a general way, it indicates the state of consciousness, experienced by the jīva or individual soul.

See **avasthātraya.**

avasthā-traya ('three states'):

It refers to the three states of consciousness with which the jīva or the individual soul is associated, in its earthly existence, viz., jāgrat (waking state), svapna (dream state) and suṣupti (deep sleep state).

avidyā ('non-knowledge'):

It is another name for ajñāna or ignorance. Sometimes it is used to signify aparā-vidyā or lower knowledge comprising all arts and sciences except that of Brahman.

avyākṛta ('undifferentiated'):

Same as avyakta. See **avyakta.**

avyakta ('the unmanifest'):

Avyakta is one of the names used for Īśvara or God in the *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda though it is a common term for pradhāna or prakṛti in the Sāṅkhyan metaphysics. It is the state of Brahman associated with māyā, before the manifestation of creation.

B

bhāga-lakṣaṇā ('part implication'):

See **jahad-ajahad-lakṣaṇā.**

Bhāmatī-prasthāna ('the Bhāmatī School'):

Though Śaṅkara (A.D. 788-820) wrote profusely, clearly enunciating the main doctrines of his school, quite a few important points of the system were left either vague of were capable of more than one interpretation. This naturally resulted in quite a voluminous Advaita literature in the post-Śaṅkara period leading to different 'prasthānas' or schools of thought. Among these, the Vārttika-prasthāna of Sureśvara (9th cent. A.D.), the Vivaraṇa-prasthāna of Padmapāda (9th cent. A.D.) and Prakāśātman (A.D. 1200), and the Bhāmatī-prasthāna of Vācaspati Miśra (A.D. 840) are the most celebrated schools.

According to the Vārttika-prasthāna, Brahman is the material cause of this world, and not māyā. The locus of avidyā is Brahman and not the jīvas. Avidyā is one only and not many. The jīvas are but ābhāsas or appearances of Brahman in the individual minds.

In the Vivaraṇa-prasthāna, avidyā is considered as the material cause of the world. Though it is positive, it is not real. Māyā, prakṛti, avyakta, avyākṛta etc., are all its synonyms. It is māyā at the cosmic level and avidyā at the individual level. Avidyā rests on Brahman but acts on the jīvas. The jīvas are pratibimbas or reflections of Brahman in the minds. (This view is called 'pratibimbavāda.')

As per the Bhāmatī-prasthāna, Brahman is the material cause of the world, not as the locus of avidyā but as the object of the avidyās supported by the jīvās. Avidyā abides in the jīvās and is plural. It is of two types: mūlāvidyā (primal nescience) and tūlāvidyā (derivative nescience). If the former is responsible for creation, it is the latter that produces error impressions. Vācaspati also subscribes to the avacchedavāda.

bhāvarūpa ('positive'):

Ajñāna or ignorance is not considered in Advaita Vedānta as a negative or unreal entity. Since it is felt or experienced, as when we say, 'I do not know anything,' 'I am an ignorant person,' it is considered

as 'bhāvarūpā' or positive (as opposed to 'abhāvarupā,' negative or unreal). However its reality is not given the status of 'sat' (that which exists), since it can be destroyed by knowledge.

bimba ('the original object'):

In the Vivaraṇa school of advaita as propounded by Padmapāda (9th cent. A.D.) and Prakāśātman (A.D. 1200), the jīva is considered as a pratibimba or reflection of Brahman, called the bimba which is the original. This school is thus called 'pratibimbavāda'.

See also **Vivaraṇa-prasthāna.**

bodhya-bodhaka ('propounded-propounder'):

The sambandha or connection that subsists between the Vedāntic texts like the Upaniṣads and what they purport to teach, viz., the ultimate unity of the jīva and Brahman, is described as 'bodhya-bodhaka.' The Vedāntic texts are 'bodhaka' or 'propounders' of that unity. The unity itself is 'bodhya,' what is propounded.

brahmacarya ('continence):

This is one of the five moral disciplines listed under yama, the first of the eight steps of Yoga. It signifies control of all bodily instincts, especially sex.

Brahmaloka ('the world of Brahmā' or the 'world eternal'):

Brahmaloka or Satyaloka is the world of Brahmā, the creator, to where liberated souls go and live permanently. It is the world of highest joy from where there is no return.

Brahman ('the Big or the Infinite'):

It is the basic Reality behind the whole creation, its origin, ground of sustenance and place of dissolution. It is described as 'sat' (pure existence), 'cit' (pure consciousness) and 'ānanda' (pure bliss). Ajñāna, avidyā or māyā is considered as Its inscrutable power. In Advaita Vedānta the Ātman, the self at the back of the individuals, is identified with Brahman.

Brahmāṇḍa ('the cosmic egg'):

The created universe is called 'Brahmāṇḍa' or the cosmic egg. The fourteen worlds with all the beings and things contained in them comprise this.

Brahma Sūtras ('aphorisms on Brahman'):

It is the famous basic treatise of Vedānta composed by Bādarāyaṇa-Vyāsa. It is considered as one of the six systems of Indian philosophy. It systematizes the philosophical tenets of the Upaniṣads which are scattered all over, and often appear to be

self-contradictory. *Vedānta Sūtras, Śārīraka Sūtras* and *Uttara Mīmāṁsā Sūtras* are the other nomenclatures for this work.

buddhi ('intellect'):

Buddhi is one of the four aspects of antaḥkaraṇa or internal organ. Discrimination, deliberation on the pros and cons, is its chief characteristic. Jīva or the individual soul is actually the reflection of Ātman (the pure consciousness) in the buddhi. In this case, buddhi signifies the whole of the antaḥkaraṇa.

C

caitanya ('consciousness'):

Caitanya, consciousness or knowledge, is the very essence of the Brahman-Ātman entity. It is sometimes called 'turīya,' the fourth also, since it is the 'fourth' compared to the three states of consciousness (avasthātraya) or the three manifestations of Brahman, viz., Īśvara, Hiraṇyagarbha and Virāṭ.

cakṣus ('the eye'):

It is one of the five jñānendriyas or organs of knowledge or perception. Apprehending rūpa or forms of objects is its characteristic. It is the product of agni, also called 'rūpa-tanmātra,' out of its sattva-aspect. It is the most important organ involved in pratyakṣa or direct perception.

cāndrāyaṇa ('related to the moon'):

Kṛcchra and cāndrāyaṇa are the two most common forms of expiation prescribed to counter the effects of sins and purify the mind. The adhikārin or competent student of Vedānta is said to have completed the performance of such prāyaścitta karmas to obviate the effects of the past sins. Cāndrāyaṇa consists in gradually decreasing the quantity of food from the full-moon day to total fasting on the new-moon day and again reversing the process. The name itself is derived from the fact that the expiatory discipline is related to the phases of the moon.

caturdaśa-bhuvanas ('fourteen worlds'):

Described in the Hindu mythological literature, these worlds, starting with Pātāla and ending with Satyaloka, come into being at the time of creation. Bhū or the earth is in the centre of this group of worlds.

Caturmukha-Brahmā ('four-faced Brahmā'):

The four-faced Brahmā of the mythological lore is the Hiraṇyagarbha aspect of Brahman, the Absolute.

See **Hiraṇyagarbha.**

caturvidha-śarīra ('fourfold bodies'):

The bodies of living beings have been classified

into four groups depending upon their origin: jarāyuja (born of the womb), aṇḍaja (born of the egg), svedaja (born out of moisture) and udbhijja (born out of the soil).

cit ('consciousness'):

Pure consciousness, the essential nature of Brahman or ātman, is called 'cit.'

citta ('mind stuff'):

Citta is one of the four aspects of antaḥkaraṇa or the internal organ, responsible for memory. The word is also used in a more general way to indicate the mind.

cittaśuddhi ('purity of mind'):

According to Vedānta, an aspirant acquires competence to practise it only after getting cittaśuddhi or purity of mind, by performing prāyaścitta-karmas or expiations and discharging the nitya-naimittika-karmas or daily and occasional obligatory duties.

D

dama ('restraint'):

The student of Vedānta, called 'adhikārin,' becomes competent to practise Vedāntic spiritual disciplines only when he has purified his mind and

has acquired the sādhanacatuṣṭaya or the four-fold spiritual discipline. 'Dama' is the second sub-discipline listed under 'śamādiṣaṭka,' which itself is the third of the four sādhanas. It signifies restraint of the five organs of knowledge (jñānendriyas) and the five organs of action (karmendriyas) from all activities except those conducive to the main Vedāntic sādhanas of śravaṇa (hearing), manana (reflection) and nididhyāsana (meditation).

darśana ('seeing'):

The word 'darśana' is widely used more as a tehnical term to indicate any philosophical system such as Cārvāka-darśana. The originators of these systems are supposed to have had a vision (darśana = seeing or vision) of the Truth through intuition. Hence the appropriateness of the term.

devadatta ('given by God'):

It is one of the five 'upaprāṇas' or subsidiary vital airs, responsible for the act of yawning. It is an aspect of apāna, one of the five main vital airs.

dhanañjaya ('the winner of wealth'):

This also is one of the five 'upaprāṇas' or subsidiary vital airs, responsible for general maintenance of the body. It is considered as an aspect of samāna, one of the five main prāṇas or vital airs.

dhāraṇā ('fixing'):

Listed as the sixth of the eight limbs of Yoga, 'dhāraṇā' is fixing the mind on the object of contemplation. It is the first step of serious meditation, leading to the next step, dhyāna.

dharma ('basic nature', 'righteousness'):

One of the most widely used terms, the word 'dharma' generally denotes righteousness as also actions prescribed by the scriptures for the people in various stages of life or following different vocations. It is the basic virtue in life to be practised by all. Its nature or characteristics can be known only by the scriptures or from virtuous men of spiritual eminence.

dhyāna ('meditation'):

It is the penultimate step in the practice of aṣṭāṅga-yoga or the eight-limbed Yoga. In this state, the mind flows freely and continuously, like the oil poured from one vessel into another, towards the object of contemplation. In it, the succeeding mental waves are absolutely identical with the preceding ones.

dṛk and dṛśya ('the seer and the seen'):

One of the standard modes of sādhanā in Advaita Vedānta to realize the ātman or the self is, to separate

the dṛk or the seer from the dṛśya or the seen. The eye is the dṛk with regard to an external object like a jar. But the mind is the dṛk for the eye itself which now becomes a dṛśya since it can analyze the nature of the eye. Arguing backwards it is ultimately realized that the Ātman (or the Self) is the dṛk of all that is seen or known, it itself having no other dṛk behind it.

dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda ('the doctrine that the world is created simultaneously with its perception'):

There is no real creation as such. It comes into existence as soon as we 'perceive' it. This peculiar school was advocated by Prakāśānanda (15th-16th cent. A.D.).

E

ekajīvavāda ('the doctrine that only one individual self exists'):

This theory attributed to Prakāśānanda pro-pounds that there is only one jīva that is in bondage (the jīva who thinks he is in bondage and is striving for liberation) and when he gets liberation, everything else disappears, since the multiplicity in the universe, has been erroneoulsy imagined by this jīva.

G

gandha ('smell'):

The word has been used in Vedāntic texts to indicate smell as well as the tanmātra or primordial element, possessing the exclusive characteristic of smell. Hence the appellation 'gandhatanmātra.' In the gross state it represents pṛthvī or the earth, with the quality of gandha. Its sattva-aspect evolves into the organ of smell, ghrāṇendriya or the nose.

ghrāṇa ('the organ of smell'):

It is one of the five jñānendriyas or organs of knowledge, the last in the series, responsible for apprehending smell. It is the product of the sattva-aspect of gandha-tanmātra, the primordial element characterised by smell.

Gitā ('song [celestial]'):

Vedāntadarśana is based on the three basic scriptures called *Prasthānatraya*. They are: the Upaniṣads, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, also called the *Gitā*.

guṇas ('qualities'):

Though the word 'guṇa' in the ordinary usage means a quality like the redness of a flower or the sweetness of honey, in the Sāṅkhya and Vedānta

systems, it is particularly employed to indicate sattva, rajas and tamas, the three fundamental elemental materials that comprise prakṛti, the mother Nature or matrix of the created universe.

guru ('the preceptor'):

In any field of life, acquisition of knowledge and competence of a science invariably needs the help of a proper teacher or guide. He is called the guru, the word itself meaning 'one who dispels the darkness of our ignorance'. However, the word is more commonly applied to the spiritual preceptor. The Hindu scriptures eulogise the guru as God Himself and declare that spiritual wisdom is impossible of attainment without his grace.

gurūpasadana ('approaching the guru'):

Once the spiritual aspirant (called 'adhikārin') has acquired all the preliminary qualifications needed for the practice of Vedāntic disciplines (see **adhikārin**) he should approach a competent guru (a knower of śāstras or scriptures and devoted to Brahman), following the usual customs prevalent in the society.

H

Hiraṇyagarbha ('of golden womb'):

He is the second aspect of Brahman, the pure consciousness, associated with ajñāna or nescience,

after Īśvara. He is associated with the totality of the subtle bodies in creation, permeating them like the thread through the beads. Hence, the name 'Sūtrātman.' He is also called 'Prāṇa,' being the subtle principle of life. The unmanifested, seed-state of creation is compared to a golden egg. Since He keeps it in his womb as it were, before manifesting it, He is called 'Hiraṇyagarbha.' He is endowed with the three powers of will, knowledge and action known as icchāśakti, jñānaśakti and kriyāśakti.

I

icchāśakti ('powers of will'):

It is one of the three powers of Hiraṇyagarbha, the other two being jñānaśakti and kriyāśakti. It is the power by which he controls the animate and inanimate aspects of creation.

Īśvara ('the Lord'):

When Brahman, the pure consciousness, the Absolute, becomes associated with ajñāna or māyā, It is called Īśvara. In the common parlance He is 'God'. 'Avyakta' or unmanifested, 'Jagatkāraṇa' or the cause of the world and 'Antaryāmin' or inner controller, are the other names by which he is known. He is sarvajña (all-knowing), sarveśvara (all-powerful) and sarvaniyantṛ (all-controller). He is the starting point of creation.

īśvarapraṇidhāna ('devotion to Īśvara'):

It is the last of the disciplines listed under niyama, the second step of aṣṭāṅgayoga or eight-limbed Yoga. This devotion to Īśvara includes offering the fruits of all actions.

J

jagatkāraṇa ('origin or cause of the universe'):

It is one of the appellations of Īśvara, since the evolution of the universe starts from him. Of course, it is sustained by him and will dissolve back in him.

jāgrat ('waking'):

It is the first of the three states of consciousness known as 'avasthātraya,' associated with the jīva or individual soul. The jīva himself, in this state of consciousness, is designated as 'viśva.'

jahad-ajahad-lakṣaṇā ('giving up – not giving up– implication'):

This is the third of a series of three lakṣaṇās or meanings by implication wherein the direct meaning is partly given up and partly accepted. For instance, in the sentence 'This is that Devadatta,' the Devadatta who was seen in the market the

previous day is recognized when he comes to our house today. In doing so, the place and time are 'given up' and only the person is 'accepted.' This is the standard method adopted in interpreting the mahāvākyas. For example, in the mahāvākya, *tat tvam asi*, (Thou art That) 'That' refers to Īśvara and 'thou' refers to the jīva; and the two can never be identical. Hence the samaṣṭi-ajñāna (totality of ajñānas) of Īśvara and its effects, viz., the power of creation, rulership etc., as also the vyaṣṭi-ajñāna (individual ajñāna) of the 'jīva' and its effects, viz., the three bodies, the five kośas, limitations of knowledge and power etc., should be set aside and only the 'caitanya' (pure consciousness) aspect which is common should be considered. Then only equality can be proved or comprehended. In proving this, a part of the direct meaning is accepted and another part is given up. This lakṣaṇā is also known as 'bhāgalakṣaṇā.'

jahad-lakṣaṇā ('giving-up-implication'):

The first of the series of three lakṣaṇās or meanings by implication, it totally gives up the direct meaning and accepts only the implied one. For instance, in the sentence, 'The village of cowherds is inside the river Gaṅgā,' since a village cannot exist inside a river, the direct meaning is given up in favour of the implied meaning viz., 'The village of cowherds is on the bank of the river Gaṅgā.'

jarāyuja ('born of the womb'):

The first of a series of four types of bodies of living beings, it represents the bodies of mammals born out of the womb.

jāteṣṭi ('sacrifice on birth'):

It is one of the sixteen religious sacraments to be performed in the life a Hindu. It is done by the father immediately after the birth of his child. It is classed under naimittika-karma or obligatory duty to be performed on special occasions.

See also **naimittika-karma.**

jihvā ('the tongue'):

The organ of taste, also called 'rasanam' or 'rasanendriya,' it is the fourth of the pañca-jñānendriyas or five organs of perception. It is formed out of the sattva-aspect of the rasatanmātra or āpas or the primordial water.

jīva ('the living being'):

All the living beings in the state of bondage and undergoing transmigration are called 'jīvas.' According to the Vedānta, the jīva is a reflection of the caitanya or pure consciousness in the antaḥkaraṇa or internal organ, or buddhi, the intellect. The jīva has three types of bodies ('trividhaśarīra'), five sheaths (pañcakośas) and three states of consciousness

('avasthā-traya'). His bondage is caused by ajñāna or ignorance, and he can get liberation through jñāna or spiritual knowledge.

jīvanmukti ('liberation while living'):

It is the state of spiritual freedom ('mukti') even while living in the body ('jīvan'). It is attained simultaneously with the rise of jñāna or spiritual knowledge. Since the body may continue for some more time till the prārabdhakarma or the karma that started the body is exhausted, the jīvanmukta apparently lives on like others but is never affected by problems and worries of any kind. He continuously enjoys the bliss of the Ātman or the Self.

jñāna ('knowledge'):

Being derived from the root 'jñā' ('to know') the word jñāna means knowledge. However, in Vedāntic literature it is used more in the sense of intuitive experience.

jñānaśakti ('power of knowledge'):

It is one of the three powers of Hiraṇyagarbha, the other two being icchāśakti and kriyāśakti. By this power he knows everything.

jñānavirodhi ('anti-knowledge'):

Ajñāna, nescience or ignorance, is one of the fundamental concepts of Vedānta. It is not just the

absence of knowledge but something opposed to knowledge. Hence it is called 'virodhi' or opponent of jñāna or knowledge. However, it is destroyed on the rise of knowledge.

jñānendriyas ('organs of knowledge or perception'):

We gain empirical knowledge through the five sense-organs, viz., eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. Hence they are termed as indriyas or sense-organs, giving jñāna or knowledge, or jñānedriyas. They are the evolutes of the sattva-part of the five primordial elements or tanmātras as follows: ākāśa or ether—śrotra, organ of hearing or ear; vāyu or air—sparśa, organ of touch or skin; agni or fire—rūpa, organ of seeing forms, or the eyes; āpas or water—rasa, organ of taste, or tongue; pṛthvī or earth—gandha, organ of smell, or nose.

jyotiṣṭoma ('sacrifice to light'):

A sacrifice belonging to the group of Somayāgas, it is especially performed by those desiring to attain heaven. It is a typical kāmya-karma or desire-motivated action.

K

kāmya-karma ('desire-motivated action'):

Those who have unfulfilled desires, desires which cannot be fulfilled through normal human endeavours,

are advised to perform certain religious rites and rituals, prescribed by the scriptures for their fulfillment through divine intervention. Such actions are called 'kāmyakarmas.' Jāteṣṭi and Jyotiṣṭoma belong to this category.

kāraṇaśarīra ('causal body'):

The jīva, the individual soul in bondage, is said to have three types of śarīras or bodies: sthūla, sūkṣma and kāraṇa. Kāraṇa śarīra or causal body is nothing but ajñāna or ignorance. Since it is the root-cause for embodiment, it is designated as such.

karma ('action'):

Though the word 'karma' generally means any action—whether of the body or of speech or of the mind—it is generally restricted to rites and rituals prescribed by the scriptures. These actions are usually included under the omnibus term 'Varṇāśramadharma,' duties prescribed for one's caste and station in life.

In a more technical sense, karma stands for the results of actions—good or bad—done by a human being. Such karma is of three types: sañcita (the accumulated), prārabdha or ārabdha (that which has begun to give its fruits) and anārabdha or āgāmī (that which may be done in future).

The various schools of Indian philosophy except the Cārvāka system (materialism) generally accept

that spiritual enlightenment destroys the first and makes the last impotent. The prārabdha, however, can be exhausted only by experiencing its fruits.

karmendriyas ('organs of action'):

The five organs of vāk (speech), pāṇi (hands), pāda (feet), pāyu (excretory organ), and upastha (organ of reproduction) are called 'karmendriyas,' 'indriyas' or sense organs responsible for 'karma' or action. They are the products of the rajas aspect of the five tanmātras or primordial elements, as follows: ākāśa gives rise to vāk, vāyu to pāṇi, agni to pāda, āpas to pāyu and pṛthvī to upastha.

kaṣāya ('attachment'):

When an aspirant is practising Vedāntic disciplines to attain the state of samādhi or complete absorption on the Ātman, he is bedevilled by four kinds of obstacles of which kaṣāya forms the third. It is the failure to rest on the Ātman due to attachment to sense-objects enjoyed previously.

kevala-lakṣaṇā ('simple implication'):

Lakṣaṇā or implication is of two kinds: kevala-lakṣaṇā and lakṣita-lakṣaṇā. In the sentence, 'The cowherd village is in the Gaṅgā river,' by simple implication—since accepting the direct meaning is ruled out—we understand that the village is on the bank of the river, so near as if it is inside the river

itself. The example for lakṣita-lakṣaṇā (implied implication) is that the word 'dvirepha' means a bee. How? Literally, it represents a word with two 'rephas' or the letter 'ra.' The word 'bhramara' has two 'ra's in it and means a bee. Hence the word 'dvirepha' by 'lakṣita-lakṣaṇā' means a bee.

kośa ('sheath'):

Just as a sheath covers a sword and hides it, the physical body, mind, etc., cover the Ātman. Hence, they are called 'kośa' or sheath. There are five such kośas.

See **pañcakośas** for details.

krama-mukti ('gradual liberation'):

The Vedāntic works accept two types of mukti or liberation: sadyomukti and kramamukti. When, by following the path of meditation on the Ātman or the Self as described in the Upaniṣads it results in the direct experience of that Self here and now, it is called 'sadyomukti' or immediate liberation. The other mukti, also described in the Upaniṣads, is 'kramamukti' or gradual liberation. Those who have practised austerities in the forest and meditation on the Vedic deities take to the path of light (arcirādimārga) or of gods (also called devayāna) after death which leads to Brahmaloka or Satyaloka from which there is no return to mundane existence.

kṛcchra ('that which is difficult'):

'Kṛcchra' is the general name for a certain class of expiatory rites (prāyaścitta-karmas) prescribed to ward off the effects of evil deeds committed knowingly. Several varieties of the same are described in the dharmaśāstras.

kriyāśakti ('power of action'):

The third power of Hiraṇyagarbha which enables him to create the world and also to act unhindered is kriyāśakti. The other two powers are: icchāśakti and jñānaśakti.

kṛkala ('pertaining to the throat'):

It is one of the five upaprāṇas or minor vital airs responsible for sneezing and is said to be an aspect of samāna, the last of the pañcaprāṇas or five vital airs.

kūrma ('the tortoise'):

One of the five subsidiary vital airs (upaprāṇas) responsible for the opening and the closing of the eyelids. It is included in vyāna, one of the five major prāṇas.

L

lakṣaṇā ('implication'):

When the direct meaning of a sentence does not

make sense, its implied meaning has to be accepted. This is called 'lakṣaṇā.' For instance, in the sentence *śoṇaḥ dhāvati*, 'Red colour is running' it is to be surmised that a red horse is running.

For details see **ajahad-lakṣaṇā, jahad-ajahad-lakṣaṇā** and **jahad-lakṣaṇā.**

lakṣita-lakṣaṇā ('implied implication'):

See **kevala-lakṣaṇā.**

lakṣyārtha ('implied meaning'):

'Lakṣyārtha' is one of the three ways of arriving at the 'artha' or meaning of a sentence, the other two being vācyārtha (direct meaning) and vyaṅgyārtha (suggested meaning). It is the meaning that is implied when the direct meaning is obviously unacceptable. For instance, in the sentence 'The Kaliṅga is adventurous,' it is the denizen of the country of Kaliṅga that is meant, though the word 'Kaliṅga' refers only to the country.

laya ('dissolution'):

Though normally the word means dissolution of the created world at the end of the cycle, in the context of Vedāntic sādhanā, it signifies the state of torpidity or sleep into which the mind lapses when it is unable to rest on the Absolute. It is the first of a series of four vighnas or obstacles, to samādhi or absorption in Brahman.

liṅgaśarīra ('the subtle body'):

See **sūkṣmaśarīra.**

M

mahābhūtas ('the great elements'):

They are the five gross elements, viz., pṛthvī, āpas, tejas or agni, vāyu and ākāśa (earth, water, fire, air and ether respectively), born out of the five tanmātras (primordial elements) by the process of pañcīkaraṇa or quintuplication. Hence each of the elements has a part of the other four.

mahāvākyas ('great sentences'):

The post-Śaṅkara writers on Advaita Vedānta have mentioned four sentences, taken from four Upaniṣads and belonging to the four Vedas, which teach the unity of the Ātman and Brahman, as four 'mahāvākyas' or great sentences. They are: *prajñānaṁ brahma* ('Consciousness is Brahman') from the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* (5.3) of the *Ṛgveda; ahaṁ brahmāsmi* ('I am Brahman') from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* of the *Yajurveda* (1.4.10); *tat tvam asi* ('You are That') from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6. 8. 7.) of the *Sāmaveda* and *ayamātmā brahma* ('This Ātman is Brahman') from the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (2) of the *Atharvaveda.*

manana ('reflection'):

This is the second of the three direct disciplines prescribed for getting the knowledge of the Ātman and its oneness with Brahman. It is defined as constant thinking of Brahman, already heard from the spiritual preceptor, strengthening it by logic which is in consonance with the purport of Vedānta.

manas ('mind'):

It is an aspect of the antaḥkaraṇa or internal organ, responsible for saṅkalpa or general thinking, including willing and vikalpa or doubting. It is an evolute of the combined sattva-aspect of all the five tanmātras or primordial elements.

manomayakośa ('the mind-sheath'):

The manas or mind, along with the pañcajñānendriyas or the five organs of knowledge, form the 'manomayakośa' or the sheath of mind. Like a sheath, it covers and hides the real nature of the Ātman or the Self. It is a part of the sūkṣma-śarīra (also called liṅga-śarīra), the subtle body, the other two parts being prāṇamayakośa (sheath of vital airs) and vijñānamayakośa (sheath of intellect).

māyā ('illusory power'):

Also called as ajñāna or avidyā (ignorance or nescience), it is the power of Brahman responsible for the illusory projection of this world. Āvaraṇa (covering or hiding) and vikṣepa (projection) are the two aspects of this power.

mokṣa ('liberation'):

See **mukti.**

mukti ('liberation'):

The state of freedom or liberation from all bonds created by ajñāna (ignorance) or māyā (illusory power), it is characterized by bliss and cessation of rebirth. 'Mokṣa,' 'kaivalya' and 'nirvāṇa' are some of the other names normally used to describe this state.

mumukṣu ('one desirous of liberation'):

According to the ṣaḍdarśanas or the six systems of Indian philosophy the real bondage for a soul is its being encased in a body, whether human or nonhuman. Hence mokṣa or mukti is permanent liberation from rebirth, and, regaining the original state. The desire for such mokṣa is 'mumukṣutva' or 'mumukṣā' and one who possesses such a desire is a 'mumukṣu'.

mumukṣutva ('desire for liberation'):

This is the last of the four sādhanās or spiritual practices called 'sādhana-catuṣṭaya' and the most important qualification needed by the student of Vedānta.

See also **mumukṣu.**

N

nāga ('that which does not move'):

It is one of the five upaprāṇas or minor vital airs responsible for bringing about eructation and vomitting. It is classed as an aspect of udāna, one of the five main vital airs.

naimittika-karma ('occasional duties'):

Obligatory duties to be performed on special occasions like birth and death in a family are called 'naimittika-karmas.' Jāteṣṭi and śrāddha are two examples. Their performance will not produce any special merit, but their non-performance will entail sin.

nāstika:

See **āstika**

nididhyāsana ('meditation'):

This is the term specially used in Vedānta to signify meditation. It has been defined as the stream of ideas of the same kind as Brahman to the exclusion of all other ideas like those of the body. Ultimately it leads to samādhi or total absorption in Brahman.

nirākāra ('without form'):

Whether Brahman, the Absolute, has any particular form or not, is a question that is often discussed by the schools of Vedānta. Arguing that an ākāra or a form puts limitations on Brahman, the non-dualistic schools declare that it is 'nirākāra' or without any particular form. The dualistic or theistic schools attribute divine and permanent forms like those of Nārāyaṇa or Śiva or Devī. Then Brahman is accepted as 'sākāra' ('with form').

nirguṇa ('without attributes'):

Whether Brahman, the Absolute, has guṇas (qualities or attributes) is another point discussed by the Vedāntic schools. Whereas the non-dualistic schools deny it (on the same basis as for ākāra or form) and declare it as 'nirguṇa' the dualistic and theistic schools accept it as 'saguṇa' or full of divine attributes.

nirvikalpaka ('without distinctions'):

Samādhi or total absorption in Brahman is of two kinds: savikalpaka and nirvikalpaka. Vikalpa means distinctions, the consciousness of the many, like 'me' and 'Brahman' and the world. In the savikalpaka samādhi the consciousness of one's own personality as distinct from Brahman, persists, however attenuated it may be. In the nirvikalpaka state, however, all awareness of multiplicity including that of oneself as distinct from Brahman, is completely dissolved.

niṣiddha-karma ('prohibited actions'):

Sinful deeds, since they make the mind impure and hence unfit for spiritual enlightenment, have been prohibited by the scriptures. Hence, the name (niṣiddha = prohibited). For example, telling lies, stealing, killing and so on, are niṣiddha-karma.

nitya-karma ('daily duties'):

Certain duties like daily worship (sandhyā) have been ordained in the scriptures as compulsory and to be performed daily (nitya = daily). They are called 'nitya-karmas.'

niyama ('restraint'):

Second step of the eightfold Yoga, niyama comprises śauca (cleanliness), santoṣa (contentment), tapas (austerity), svādhyāya (self-study of scriptures) and īśvaraprañidhāna (devotion to God). They help to restrain the mind from evil deeds and engage it in spiritually good pursuits.

pāda ('the foot'):

It is one of the five karmendriyas or organs of action formed by the rajas-aspect of all the five tanmātras or primordial elements.

pañcakośas ('the five sheaths'):

Those factors of our personality which cover or hide—like a sheath covering a sword—the Ātman, are called 'kośas.' They are five in number: annamayakośa (sheath of food, the physical body), prāṇamayakośa (sheath of vital airs), manomayakośa (sheath of mind), vijñānamayakośa (sheath of intellect) and ānandamayakośa (sheath of bliss). (See under the individual kośas for details.) Kośas 2 to 4 form the sūkṣmaśarīra or the subtle body, responsible for transmigration.

pañcamahābhūtas ('the five great elements'):

See **mahābhūtas.**

pañcaprāṇas ('the five vital airs'):

The five vital airs are: prāṇa, apāna, vyāna, udāna and samāna. (See under each for details.)

pañcīkaraṇa ('process of quintuplication'):

The process by which each of the pañcamahābhūtas (five great elements) is formed out of the pañcatanmātras (five primordial elements) is called 'pañcīkaraṇa.' Each former element—because of this—contains half of the corresponding tanmātra and one-eighth of each of the other four. For instance, one unit of the mahābhūta pṛthvī = 1/2 pṛthvī tanmātra + 1/8 of ap tanmātra + 1/8 of agni tanmātra + 1/8 of vāyu tanmātra + 1/8 of ākāśa tanmātra. Because of this pañcīkaraṇa, each of the mahābhūtas contains a part of the other four bhūtas and hence their characteristics.

pāṇi ('the hand'):

One of the five karmendriyas or organs of action, pāṇi (the hands) is formed out of the rajas-aspect of the tanmātras or primordial elements.

pāramārthika ('relating to the highest truth'):

Truth ('sattā') according to Advaita metaphysics is of three types: prātibhāsika (apparent), vyāvahārika (practical) and pāramārthika (the highest).

When we wrongly perceive the upright ears of a hare as its horns, it is 'prātibhāsika' sattā. This world of senses is 'vyāvahārika' sattā since it is real for all practical purposes. Brahman or God which is the highest and unchanging truth is 'pāramāthika' sattā.

Paramātman ('the Supreme Self'):

In the Advaita system of Vedānta, Brahman, the Absolute, is also called 'Paramātman,' the highest or the Supreme Self as opposed to the jīvātmas or the individual selves which are, in the ultimate analysis, unreal. (See **Bhāmatīprasthāna** for the details.) However, the theistic schools of Rāmānuja (A.D. 1017-1137) and Madhva (A.D. 1197-1276) posit the two as eternally distinct and separate. The former controls the latter who are for ever subservient to him.

pariṇāma ('change'):

Pariṇāma is a general term indicating change. It can be change of form as clay taking the shape of a pot or change of state like milk becoming curds. The question that is often discussed by the schools of Vedānta is whether Brahman, the Absolute, undergoes pariṇāma to become this world or not. Whereas Advaita Vedānta denies any pariṇāma to Brahman, some of the other schools like those of Rāmānuja (A.D. 1017-1137) accept it.

pāyu ('organ of excretion'):

The excretory organs called 'pāyu' are one of the five karmendriyas or organs of action and are evolved out of the rajas-aspect of the five tanmātras or primordial elements.

phala ('the fruit'):

It is a technical term indicating one of the ṣaḍvidha-liṅgas (six characteristic signs) by which the real purport of Vedāntic texts can be determined. It signifies the fruit or utility of the subject matter (viṣaya) of a section. In Vedānta it is Brahmajñāna or knowledge of Brahman, giving liberation.

pradhāna ('the primary [substance]'):

This word is a typical technical term used by the Sāṅkhya philosophy to indicate the basic and

fundamental material substance out of which the world evolves. It is called 'prakṛti' or 'māyā' in Advaita Vedānta, though it is not conceded to be real or permanent.

Prajāpati ('Lord of beings'):

This is one of the epithets of Hiraṇyagarbha, since he is the lord of beings in creation.

prājña ('one who is unaware'):

It is the name of the jīva or individual soul in the state of deep-sleep. In this state the jīva remains temporarily in union with Brahman.

prakaraṇa ('topic', 'treatise'):

In the Vedāntic literature, the word is used in more senses than one. It may be a topic under discussion. In this sense it is also one of the six ways of determining the correct meaning of a Vedic or Vedāntic text.

Elementary treatises on a particular science or subject are also called 'prakaraṇas' or 'prakaraṇa-granthas'. For instance the works *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* or *Vedāntasāra* are prakaraṇas of Advaita Vedānta.

pralaya ('dissolution'):

According to the Vedānta systems this world or creation has no beginning or no end (anādi and ananta) and the cycle of sṛṣṭi (creation), sthiti (preservation) and pralaya (dissolution) goes on eternally.

Pralaya, according to the paurāṇic literature is of several types though the pralaya at the end of a kalpa (a day of Brahmā, the creator), called as 'naimittika-pralaya' or 'Brāhma-pralaya', is the one that is commonly referred to.

pramāṇas ('means of knowledge'):

Pramāṇas or means of getting knowledge are an important topic discussed in detail by the Indian philosophical systems. They generally range from three to six, the latter including the former. They are: pratyakṣa (direct perception), anumāna (inference), āptavākya (verbal testimony) or āgama or śabda (scriptural testimony), upamāna (comparison), arthā-patti (postulation) and anupalabdhi (nonperception).

For details see the respective titles.

Prāṇa ('the life'):

Hiraṇyagarbha, the second aspect of Brahman associated with ajñāna (ignorance) is also known as Prāṇa because he is the very life of the universe.

prāṇa ('vital air'):

It is one of the five vital airs centred in the nose and responsible for respiration. It is a product of the rajas-aspect of the five tanmātras or primordial elements.

prāṇamayakośa ('the life-sheath'):

It is the pañcaprāṇas or the five vital airs, along with the karmendriyas or organs of action, that constitute the prāṇamayakośa. They cover the soul like a sheath, hiding its real nature, which is caitanya or consciousness.

prāṇāyāma ('regulation of breath'):

The fourth of the eight steps of Yoga, it is concerned with the control of the prāṇic energy and hence the mind, by regulating breathing. Recaka (exhalation), pūraka (inhalation) and kumbhaka (retention) are its three steps.

prārabdha-karma ('karma which has begun to give its results'):

See **karma.**

pratibimbavāda:

See **Bhāmatīprasthāna.**

pratyāhāra ('withdrawal'):

Withdrawal of the mind which is going out through the sense organs, in order to fix it on the object of meditation, is pratyāhāra. It is the fifth step of the eight-limbed Yoga.

prasthānatraya ('the three basic scriptures'):

The Vedāntic systems recognize the following three works as basic to their philosophy: the

Upaniṣads, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*. Almost all of them have created annotative literature on these three.

pratyakṣa ('direct perception'):

It is one of the three or the six pramāṇas (methods of getting knowledge) accepted by the six systems of Indian philosophy. It is the knowledge gained by the direct perception of an object by the respective sense-organ.

For instance, the knowledge of a black earthen pot seen by the eyes or the sweet sound of a flute heard by the ear—are got by pratyakṣa.

See also **pramāṇas.**

prāyaścitta-karma ('expiatory action'):

'Prāyas' is austerity and 'citta' is determination. Hence, it signifies the determination to destroy sins through austerity. Many such expiatory rites like kṛcchra, cāndrāyaṇa, govrata etc., have been prescribed in the secondary scriptures called dharmaśāstras.

prayojana ('utility'):

Listed as the fourth of the anubandha-catuṣṭaya, the four preliminaries to the study of Vedānta, prayojana tells us about the utility of this study. It ultimately leads to the attainment of bliss through the realization of the unity of the individual Self with Brahman. This is the prayojana we reap.

pṛthvī ('the earth'):

The element pṛthvī or earth, one of the five mahābhūtas or compounded elements, is the gross aspect of the gandhatanmātra or pṛthvītanmātra, formed after pañcīkaraṇa (quintuplication). It is evolved out of the tamas-aspect of the tanmātras or primordial elements.

R

rajas ('the active one'):

The second of the three guṇas that comprise ajñāna (avidyā, māyā) or nescience, it is the active component that is responsible for movement, passion and unrest.

rasa ('taste'):

Though the word means taste in the ordinary parlance, it is a technical term standing for the 'rasatanmātra' or 'ap-tanmātra,' the primordial element of water. In the gross state it is the mahābhūta (compounded element) water, formed out of pañcīkaraṇa (quintuplication). Its sattva-aspect gives rise to rasana, the organ of taste, viz., the tongue and the palate.

rasana ('the organ of taste'):

See **rasa**. It is one of the five jñānendriyas or organs of knowledge.

rasāsvāda ('enjoying the taste'):

The last of a series of four vighnas or obstacles to samādhi (total absorption), it is defined as enjoying the taste of bliss that one gets in savikalpaka-samādhi. It is an obstacle in so much as it prevents the aspirant from rising to the next and last step of nirvikalpaka-samādhi.

See **samādhi**

rūpa ('form'):

It represents the subtle agni or tejas, a tanmātra or primordial element, with the characteristic of comprehending rūpa or form. The mahābhūta (compounded element) agni (fire) or tejas (light) is its gross evolute formed after pañcīkaraṇa or quintuplication. Its sattva-aspect gives rise to the organ of sight, the eyes.

S

śabda ('sound'):

The tanmātra of śabda or sound is none other than ākāśa, the primordial element ether, one of the five such tanmātras. The gross ākāśa is its product after undergoing the process of pañcīkaraṇa or quintuplication. The organ of hearing, the śrotra or the ears, is its evolute out of its sattva-aspect.

sādhanā ('means of spiritual enlightenment'):

These sādhanās are four.
See **sādhana-catuṣṭaya.**

sādhana-catuṣṭaya ('the four means of spiritual enlightenment'):

The aspirant for the study and practice of Vedānta is expected to acquire these four sādhanās, viz., viveka or discrimination, vairāgya or renunciation, śamādi-ṣaṭka or the group of six spiritual attributes beginning with śama or peace and ending with samādhāna or concentration, and mumukṣutva or desire for liberation. For details, see under each title.

ṣaḍvidha-liṅgas ('six characteristic signs'):

Once the student of Vedānta acquires the necessary competence to practise the Vedāntic disciplines, he is to approach a teacher well-versed in the Vedās and established in Brahman. From him he should first hear (śravaṇa) about the truth. This hearing involves determining the correct import of the scriptures by applying the ṣaḍvidha-liṅgas or six characteristic signs. They are: upakrama-upasaṁhāra (beginning and conclusion), apūrvatā (originality), phala (fruit or result), arthavāda (eulogy), abhyāsa (repetition) and upapatti (reasoning, demonstration). See under each for details.

Saguṇa-Brahman ('Brahman with attributes'):

See **nirguṇa.**

śama ('tranquillity'):

It is one of the six disciplines listed under śamādi-ṣaṭka, which itself is the third sādhana under sādhana-catuṣṭaya. It is keeping the mind away from pursuing the worldly pleasures which are inimical to sādhana, like śravaṇa (hearing the Vedāntic scriptures).

samādhāna ('concentration'):

Listed as the fifth of the śamādi-ṣaṭka, it means concentrating the mind on śravaṇa (hearing) of the scriptural passages and other subjects conducive to the same.

samādhi ('the total absorption'):

Nididhyāsana or meditation ultimately leads to samādhi, perfect concentration and total absorption in the object of concentration. In Vedānta the object is the unity of Ātman with Brahman. Samādhi is of two kinds: savikalpaka and nirvikalpaka.

See **nirvikalpaka** for details.

śamādi-ṣaṭka ('the group of six beginning with śama'):

It consists of śama (tranquillity), dama (self-control), uparati (cessation of external organs from the

pursuit of sense-objects), titikṣā (endurance), samādhāna (concentration), and śraddhā (faith). It forms the third limb of the sādhana-catuṣṭaya, the four sādhanas.

samāna ('the equal or uniform'):

The last of the pañcaprāṇas or five vital airs, samāna situated in the central region of the body, is responsible for digestion and assimilation of food. Like the other prāṇas, it is also an evolute of the tanmātras or primordial elements out of their rajas-aspect.

sāmānādhikaraṇya ('having the same locus'):

This is one of the three relationships that can exist between two words. In the sentence 'This is that Devadatta,' the word 'that' signifying the person Devadatta associated with the past and the word 'this' signifying Devadatta associated with the present, both refer to one and the same person called Devadatta. 'Adhikaraṇa' means the 'substratum or the basis' and 'samāna' means the 'same'. Hence 'sāmānādhikaraṇya' signifies 'having the same substratum'. It is this method that is applied in interpreting the famous Vedic dictum *tat tvam asi*, 'Thou art That!'

samaṣṭi ('the totality'):

Vyaṣṭi (the individual) and samaṣṭi (the total)

are two words often used in Vedānta in connection with ajñāna (ignorance). The caitanya (pure consciousness) associated with samaṣṭi ajñāna gets the name Īśvara and so on, depending upon the stage of evolution. Similarly when it is associated with vyaṣṭi ajñāna, it is called prājña and so on.

sambandha ('the connection' or 'relation'):

The third of the four anubandhas or preliminaries, sambandha indicates the relationship between the Ātman-Brahman identity that is to be realized and the treatises like the Upaniṣads which purport to teach about it. It is bodhya-bodhaka (propounded and propounder) sambandha that subsists between them.

See also **bodhya-bodhaka.**

saṁnyāsa ('the act of renouncing'):

Vedānta considers the performance of karma or scripture-ordained actions as only a preliminary exercise aimed at purifying the mind making it fit for contemplation on the Ātman. Once this state of mind is attained, one has to do saṁnyāsa or renounce the world and accept the monastic way of life. Some systems of Vedānta go to the extent of declaring that mokṣa or liberation is possible only through saṁnyāsa.

saṁsāra ('transmigration'):

Hinduism believes that the soul (jīvātman)

though eternal and free in its essential nature as Ātman, transmigrates from one body after its death to another through rebirth according to its karma. This cycle of births and deaths or transmigration is technically called 'saṁsāra', the word itself being derived from the root 'sṛ,' 'to move'.

saṁskāra ('latent impression'):

Any thought, word or deed, whether good or bad, leaves an impression on the mind provoking a similar action in future. Such an impression that remains latent is termed as 'saṁskāra'. Conquest of the evil saṁskāras by creating good ones and then transcending them too is an important aspect of spiritual practice.

saṁyama ('control' or 'master'):

Though it means 'self-control' in general, as a technical word used in the *Yoga-sutras* of Patañjali, it signifies dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi together, when the object of concentration is the same for all the three stages of yoga. By practising saṁyama on different objects, various psychic powers can be obtained.

sañcitakarma:

See **karma.**

saṅkalpa ('resolve'):

One of the general aspects of the functioning of

manas or the mind is 'saṅkalpa,' a resolve of the type, 'I will do this,' 'I shall have it' and so on.

The word is also used in a more technical sense in religious rites where it purports to give the purpose and mode of performing the ritual.

śāstra ('scripture'):

A religious work that ordains a person to do or not to do certain things (śās = to ordain) and protects him in the spiritual sense (tra = to protect) if he does so, is called 'śāstra'. The Vedas and allied scriptures that follow them are accepted as 'śāstra' by the Vedānta systems.

Satyaloka:

See **Brahmaloka.**

smṛti ('that which is to be remembered'):

If the Vedas are called 'śruti' ('that which is heard') and accepted as the primary authority in religio-spiritual matters, the works of Manu, Parāśara and Yājñavalkya as also a host of similar books which are dependent works that remind us about the basic teachings of the Vedas (smṛ = to remember) and build further upon them, are known as 'smṛtis'. However, whenever there seems to be a conflict between the śruti and smṛtis in any aspect of teaching, the latter is discarded in favour of the former.

sat-cit-ānanda ('existence-consciousness-bliss'):

Ātman-Brahman, the Absolute, the basis of all that exists and by knowing which everything else is known is described as sat (eternal existence), cit (eternal consciousness) and ānanda (eternal bliss). These three are not its qualities or characteristics but its essential nature; and they are, in the ultimate analysis, not different from one another.

See **svarūpalakṣaṇa.**

śruti ('what is heard')

The Vedas are called 'śruti' since they are considered by the traditionalists as 'śruta' or 'heard' by the ṛṣis or sages in the depths of their mystical experience. Also, the Vedas have always been taught by word of mouth, the disciples learning them after *hearing* them uttered by their teacher.

svarūpalakṣaṇa ('essential characteristic'):

According to the Advaita Vedānta the integral or essential characteristic (svarūpalakṣaṇa) of Brahman is 'sat-cit-ānanda' (existence-consciousness-bliss) whereas the 'taṭasthalakṣaṇa' (accidental characteristics) are that it is responsible for creation, preservation and dissolution of this world. An example can make these ideas more clear.

While indicating the house of Devadatta, one can point out the direction of its location through

the extended branch of a mango tree nearby. The house itself may then be described as built of bricks with a tiled roofing and green in colour. The former (the mango tree and its branch) stands for the taṭasthalakṣaṇa and the latter for the svarūpalakṣaṇa.

It should be noted that the taṭasthalakṣaṇa has nothing to do with the object described though it certainly helps in locating or recognizing it.

tamas ('the dark one')

It is the last of the three guṇas comprising ajñāna or ignorance. Its main characteristics are sleep, indolence, darkness and inclination towards evil.

tanmātras ('that only'):

The five primordial elements that manifest from the Ātman associated with ajñāna or ignorance are called 'tan-mātras' since each of them contains one quality and is only *that* quality. For instance, the primordial element ākāśa has only śabda (sound or vibration) as its characteristic and hence called 'śabda-tanmātra.' The other elements are: sparśa-tanmātra or vāyu (air), rūpa-tanmātra or agni (fire), rasa-tanmātra or āpas (water), and gandha-tanmātra or pṛthvī (earth). These tanmātras are also called 'sūkṣmabhūtas' (subtle elements) or 'apañcīkṛta-bhūtas' (uncompounded elements). Further creation

takes place out of them, associated, of course, with the Ātman.

tapas ('that which burns'):

Tapas or austerity is the third of the five disciplines listed under yama which itself is the second limb of the aṣṭāṅgayoga of Patañjali. The austerity pertains to body, speech and mind.

taṭastha-lakṣaṇa:

See **svarūpalakṣaṇa** for details.

titikṣā ('forbearance'):

Titikṣā or forbearance of all pairs of opposites, of all sufferings, without reaction or murmur, is the fourth discipline listed under śamādiṣaṭka.

triguṇātmaka ('comprising the three guṇas'):

Ajñāna or ignorance or nescience is said to be 'triguṇātmaka' since it consists of the three guṇas sattva, rajas, and tamas.

trividhaśarīra ('three kinds of bodies'):

It refers to the sthūla, sūkṣma and kāraṇa śarīras or the gross, subtle and causal bodies that cover and bind the jīva, the individual soul.

turīya ('the fourth'):

Since the Ātman/Brahman, the pure caitanya or consciousness, is beyond the three states of consciousness experienced by the jīva, the bound individual soul, it is called the 'turīya' or the fourth.

tvak ('the skin'):

It is the organ of touch, the skin, one of the five jñānendriyas or organs of knowledge, born of the sattva-aspect of vāyu-tanmātra.

U

udāna ('breathing upwards'):

It is the fourth of a series of five prāṇas (the five vital airs). It is situated in the throat with its movement poised upwards. It is this vital air that helps the jīva leave the body at the time of death.

udbhijja ('shooting forth'):

The last of the four kinds of bodies produced in creation, it represents the plant kingdom since the seeds while germinating 'shoot up' breaking the earth above them.

upa-prāṇas ('subsidiary prāṇas'):

The five subsidiary prāṇas or vital airs are: nāga, kūrma, kṛkala, devadatta and dhanañjaya. See under each for details.

upādhi ('limiting adjunct'):

Any adventitious object which apparently influences something else to appear differently from what it really is, is 'upādhi'. For instance, a red flower near a colourless crystal makes it appear as red. The red flower is called an 'upādhi' for the crystal. Similarly the body-mind complex is an upādhi for the Ātman (the individual soul) making it appear as the jīva (the limited transmigrating self) and the world is an upādhi for Brahman, the Absolute, who has nothing to do with creation.

upakrama-upasaṁhāra ('introduction and conclusion'):

It is the first of the ṣaḍvidha-liṅgas or six characteristic signs by which the true import of the scriptures is determined. It means presentation of the subject matter of a section at its beginning and its end.

upamāna ('comparison'):

It is one of the six sources of knowledge accepted by the Mīmāṁsā and the Advaita Vedānta systems. It is the knowledge of an object seen now, gained by comparing it with a previously seen or known object. If a person has learnt that an animal called 'gavaya' lives generally in forests, that it looks almost like a cow but with certain different features and sees one

in a forest he visits, he can immediately recognize it as a 'gavaya' by remembering the cow he has seen earlier and comparing its features with this new animal. This knowledge is thus got by upamāna or comparison.

Upaniṣad ('sacred wisdom'):

Spiritual wisdom learnt by a disciple sitting at the feet of the guru or the preceptor, as described in the Vedas is 'Upaniṣad'. Literally, it signifies brahmavidyā or ātmavidyā (knowledge of Brahman or the Ātman) that loosens the bonds of saṁsāra, destroys ajñāna or ignorance and leads to Brahman/Ātman.

There are several Upaniṣads which form the end portions of the Vedas and hence called 'Vedānta'. Upaniṣads are the basis of the Vedānta-systems.

upapatti ('reasoning'):

Last of the ṣaḍvidha-liṅgas or six characteristic signs by which the correct import of the scriptures is determined, upapatti is logic and reasoning in support of the subject matter.

uparati ('cessation'):

It is the cessation of the external organs (eye etc.,) restrained earlier, from the pursuit of objects inimical to śravaṇa (hearing) etc.

upāsanā ('sitting near' or 'meditation'):

(1) It is defined as meditation on Saguṇa Brahman, Brahman with attributes, as prescribed in the scriptures. It is one of the means of purifying one's mind.

(2) Though the word literally means 'sitting near' (upa = near, āsana = being seated), it in effect means 'sitting near God' or 'feeling the presence of God or a deity'. It is commonly used to indicate meditation on a deity or on a rite in a symbolical way. According to Advaita Vedānta such upāsanās may lead to higher worlds but not to mokṣa or liberation.

upastha ('that which is near' or 'the organ of generation'):

Organs of reproduction are called 'upastha' and are one of the five karmendriyas or organs of action. They are products of the rajas-aspect of the pṛthivī-tanmātra or the primordial element, earth.

V

vācyārtha ('direct meaning'):

It is the direct meaning of a sentence, the first of a series of three meanings possible. For example, 'Bring the cow.' In this sentence there is only a simple direct meaning and no suggestions or implications are involved.

vairāgya ('detachment'):

Vairāgya or renunciation or the spirit of detachment is the second of the four sādhanās listed under sādhana-catuṣṭaya. It is a natural consequence of viveka or discrimination. It pertains to all objects of pleasure whether of this world or of the next.

vaiśvānara ('the Universal in human beings'):

The pure caitanya when associated with the totality of gross bodies of creation (samaṣṭisthūla-śarīra) is called 'Vaiśvānara' or 'Virāṭ'.

vāk ('the speech'):

The organ of speech or vāgindriya is one of the five karmendriyas or organs of action. It is the product of the rajas-aspect of the tanmātra ākāśa or ether.

Vārttikaprasthāna:

See **Bhāmatīprasthāna.**

vāyu ('the wind or air'):

At the subtle level, it is the sparśa-tanmātra. At the gross level, it is the mahābhūta vāyu or air, produced by pañcīkaraṇa or quintuplication. As tanmātra, it gives rise to the organ of touch, the skin.

Vedāṅgas ('parts of Veda'):

To understand the real meaning of the Vedas, six subsidiary branches of knowledge need to be studied. They are: Śikṣā (phonetics), Chandas (metre), Vyākaraṇa (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Jyotiṣa (astronomy) and Kalpa (ritualistic practices). These are called the 'Vedāṅgas' or subsidiary sciences connected with the Vedas.

Vedānta ('the end or essence of Veda'):

The Upaniṣads (and allied literature) are called Vedānta because they come at the end of the Vedas and contain the essence of Vedic teachings. They also point towards the goal of life.

Vedānta-sūtras ('Aphorisms on Vedānta'):

See **Brahma Sūtras.**

Vedas ('knowledge'):

Derived from the root-verb 'vid,' 'to know,' the word 'Veda' means 'knowledge'. However, it is used in a more technical sense to indicate the four basic scriptures of Hinduism: The *Ṛgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. Each of these is again divided into four parts, the last of which deals with philosophy and is known as the 'Upaniṣad' or the 'Vedānta'.

videha-mukti ('liberation after death'):

Even after obtaining the knowledge of the Ātman, the body may continue due to the past momentum of actions. When the body dies, it gets resolved into the original causes. The subtle body also gets disintegrated. Then the soul attains final liberation. This is known as 'videha-mukti.'

vijñāna ('consciousness'):

Meaning 'awareness' or 'consciousness' the word is generally used to indicate the essential nature of Brahman/Ātman (= cit). It is also used sometimes to describe the jīva or the individual self.

vijñānamayakośa ('sheath of intellect'):

The buddhi or intellect along with the five jñānendriyas or organs of knowledge forms the vijñānamayakośa or the sheath of intellect. It is called a kośa or the sheath since it covers and hides the knowledge of the Ātman.

vikalpa ('doubt or alternative'):

The word is commonly used in Vedāntic literature to describe the nature of the mind. Manas or the mind is said to be that aspect of citta or the mind-stuff which functions as saṅkalpa (resolve) and vikalpa (doubt). The word vikalpa is also used to indicate an alternative.

vikāra ('modification'):

According to the Sāṅkhya school of philosophy, any modification of the original unmodified substance called pradhāna or prakṛti is a 'vikāra'. An apparent transformation of the Absolute into the relative, an alteration from the natural form or state of a substance is also a 'vikāra'. For instance, curds are a vikāra of milk. Advaita Vedānta, however, does not accept the world to be a 'vikāra' of Brahman, but only a 'vivarta.'

vikṣepa ('throwing up'):

It is the second power of ajñāna or ignorance, the first one being āvaraṇa or covering. It projects the object, upon which it acts, as something other than what it is. Like semi-darkness making a rope appear as a snake, this power makes the universe appear in Brahman.

virāṭ ('the big'):

See **vaiśvānara.**

viṣaya ('subject'):

The subject matter of a Vedāntic treatise, viṣaya is the second of the anubandha-catuṣṭaya or the four preliminaries.

See also **anubandha-catuṣṭaya.**

viśeṣaṇa and viśeṣya ('an adjective and the substantive'):

This is one of the three relations that can exist between two words. When we say, 'This is a red hybiscus flower,' the word 'red' is the viśeṣaṇa or the quality (an adjective) qualifying the hybiscus flower which is the viśeṣya or the noun or the substantive. While interpreting the sentence *tat tvam asi*, 'Thou art That,' the word 'thou' is not accepted by the Advaita Vedānta as a viśeṣaṇa of 'That' as some schools contend.

viśva ('one who has entered'):

The caitanya or pure consciousness when identified with the individual gross body and in the waking state, is called 'viśva.' To put in another way, it is the jīva in the jāgrat or waking state.

Vivaraṇa-prasthāna:

See **Bhāmatī-prasthāna.**

vivartavāda ('the doctrine of apparent transformation'):

The basic cause of an erroneous perception, as that of a snake in rope, is called ajñāna or avidyā. It has two powers: āvaraṇaśakti (veiling power) and vikṣepaśakti (transforming power). It veils the real nature of the rope and apparently transforms it into

a snake. This apparently transformed object is called a 'vivarta' of the original and the theory that propounds it is known as **vivartavāda.**

viveka ('discrimination'):

Viveka or discrimination between the real and the unreal, is the first of the four sādhanās called 'sādhana-catuṣṭaya.' It leads to vairāgya or renunciation.

vṛtti ('modification'):

The nature of the citta or the mind-stuff is to constantly rise in the form of vṛttis or waves. They are obstacles to yoga or perfect concentration on the Ātman or the Self. However, by making these vṛttis take the form of the Ātman (Brahman) one can attain the Ātman (Brahman) in course of time.

vyaṅgyārtha ('suggested meaning'):

When a word has several meanings but the other words used along with it help us to fix it, it is called 'vyaṅgyārtha.' For instance, in the sentence 'Hari is with śaṅkha and cakra (conch and discus)' it is Lord Nārāyaṇa that is understood as the meaning of the word 'Hari,' even though the word has several other meanings like a monkey, a lion, etc., because the words 'śaṅkha' and 'cakra' help us to fix it, by suggesting it.

vyaṣṭi ('the individual aspect'):

The word has been used with respect to ajñāna or ignorance. Ajñāna is many when looked at from the standpoint of the individuals.

vyāvahārika:

See **pāramārthika.**

vyutthāna ('risen'):

It is the normal state of consciousness to which the yogi returns after having risen from samādhi or total absorption.

Y

yama ('restraint'):

Yama is the first step of the eight-limbed Yoga. It consists of ahiṁsā (non-injury), satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacarya (continence or celibacy) and aparigraha (non-acceptance of gifts). See under each for details.

Yoga ('union [of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul]'):

The word 'yoga' derived from the root *yuj* has two senses: samādhi or superconscious experience through perfect concentration of the mind; yoking or

uniting the individual self with God. The aṣṭāṅga-yoga of Patañjali which is also known as Yoga has been accepted as a mode of sādhanā though its philosophy (practically the same as that of the Sāṅkhya system) is not, by the Vedānta systems.

ADDENDUM

sthūlaśarīra ('gross body')

Sthūlaśarīra is the first of the three śarīras or bodies which bind the jīva or the individual soul. It is the gross body or the physical body that comes into being at birth, is nourished by anna or food—hence called 'annamayakośa' also—and is destroyed on death.

sūkṣmaśarīra ('subtle body')

It is this body of the jiva that is primarily responsible for its transmigration. It comprises three kośas or sheaths viz., prāṇamaya, manomaya, and vijñānamaya. They contain, respectively, the five karmendriyas (organs of action), the five prāṇas (vital airs), the five jñānendriyas (organs of knowledge), manas or mind and buddhi or intellect.

vyāna ('that which moves in all directions')

The middle one of the five prāṇas or vital airs, vyāna pervades the whole body and supplies the necessary energy to do hard work like running or bending a bow.

APPENDIX

SADĀNANDA'S VEDĀNTASĀRA

Mokṣa or liberation from transmigratory existence is the final goal of human life. Hence it is also called parama-puruṣārtha ('the highest of the ends desired by human beings'). The mortal who attains to that state becomes immortal. He dives and swims in the ocean of bliss, he gets dissolved in it. Who would not wish to get such a beatific experience? However, none can get it without striving for it. There can be no siddhi (fulfilment) without sādhanā (the means). That is why our philosophical treatises which keep before us the paramapuruṣārtha, give as much importance to sādhanā as to intellectual speculation. In fact, this is the reason for calling them darśanas. Darśana means seeing, direct experience. The ṛṣis (sages) 'saw' the Highest Truth, experienced not only the nature of that Truth but also the path that leads to It. That is why these treatises were called darśanas. This is the fundamental difference between our darśanas and the philosophies of the West.

Among such darśanas, the Āstika Darśanas—those which accept the supreme authority of the Vedas—are six in number. They are: Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta. Vedānta, the last of these, is the crowning glory of

the Indian philosophical systems. It depends mainly on the Upaniṣads. There are three main branches in Vedānta, the result of three types of traditions: Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. Among these, Advaita seems to have been more popular and gathered greater number of followers. Starting with Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara, this tradition has flourished continuously for 1,400 years and has produced hundreds of works. Some of these works have been written as commentaries on the Prasthānatraya.* Others have come down as glosses and explanations of the main commentaries. When the arguments put forward in these works to defend their thought were criticized by other schools, newer works—mainly dialectical—to counter them, had to be written. Apart from these, which were meant exclusively for the intellectual elite, simpler works for the benefit of common people were also composed. Such works were called prakaraṇas. Sadānanda's *Vedāntasāra* has a special place among such prakaraṇas.

Not much is known about this Sadānanda. Scholars opine that he probably lived at the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th. He was the paramaguru (guru's guru) of Nṛsiṁha Sarasvatī, the author of *Subodhinī*, one of the well-known glosses on the *Vedāntasāra*. Two more

* The three basic scriptures: the Upaniṣads, the *Brahma-sūtras*, and the *Bhagavadgītā*.

Sadānandas are known to us : Sadānanda Kāśmīraka, the author of *Advaita-brahma-siddhi*; Sadānanda *Vyāsa*, the composer of the work *Advaita-siddhānta-sāra*. Scholars are undecided whether all these three are the same person or are different. However there are no two opinions about the beauty and the speciality of this work, *Vedāntasāra*, for the following reasons:

1. It pays greater attention to the prameya (the things to be known) which are more relevant to the spiritual aspirants, than to the pramāṇas (methods of knowledge).
2. It refers briefly to the post-Śaṅkara schools of Advaita.
3. It deals in great detail with the interpretation of the famous Vedāntic dictum, *tat tvam asi*.
4. It considers the Yoga of Patañjali as an integral part of nididhyāsana (meditation).

Though short, this work has been very popular among the students of Advaita Vedānta. The five commentaries that are available on it are proof of this. They are:

(a) *Bālabodhinī* of Āpadeva;

(b) *Subodhinī* of Nṛsiṁha Sarasvatī;

(c) *Vidvanmanorañjanī* of Rāmatīrtha;

(d) *Vedāntasāra-ṭīkā* by an unknown author;

(e) *Vedāntasāra-vyākhyā* by Rāmacandrānanda Sarasvatī.

Among these, the first three have been printed. The other two are available in manuscript form in some Oriental libraries.

The contents of this work may now be summarized as follows:

The word 'Vedānta' indicates the Upaniṣads which contain the quintessence of the Vedas, the *Brahmasūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa, the *Bhagavadgītā* and all other works which follow the spirit of these. The Vedānta philosophy describes not only the nature of the Truth but also the path that leads to its experience. But one who desires to follow it should have first cleansed his mind by the proper study of the Vedas and by the performance of the various karmas (rituals) and upāsanās (meditations) prescribed in them. After thus attaining a certain degree of purity of mind, he should now take up the practice of sādhana-catuṣṭaya or the fourfold spiritual practice. It consists of: viveka (discrimination), vairāgya (renunciation), śamādiṣaṭka (group of six virtues beginning with śama or peace of mind and ending with śraddhā or faith), and mumukṣutva (desire for emancipation).

Viveka is the knowledge that Brahman alone is real and eternal, and this world of attractive sense-pleasures is transient. This naturally produces vairāgya or spirit of renunciation towards the world.

Then the aspirant tries to cultivate the six well-known virtues viz., śama (peace of mind), dama (self-control), uparati (withdrawal of the mind from the sense-objects), titikṣā (forbearance), samādhāna (concentration of mind) and śraddhā (faith). As a result of this, his mumukṣutva (desire for liberation) grows. Then he respectfully approaches a competent guru for instructions. He listens (śravaṇa) to the guru's teaching, reflects (manana) over them, and then meditates (nididhyāsana) on the Truth that emerges in his mind as a result. This ripens into realization of his Ātman or Self that has always been present in his heart, through the destruction of ajñāna (ignorance). As long as the prārabdha-karma (the karma that is responsible for this birth) lasts, he continues to live in the body, but as a jīvanmukta (one who is free even while living). Then, when the body falls, he attains videha-mukti (freedom from rebirth).

When the disciple, who is a jijñāsu (aspirant after Truth) and a mumukṣu (aspirant after liberation) approaches the guru, the guru teaches him the Truth by following the method of adhyāropa and apavāda. These are technical terms commonly used in Advaita literature. Adhyāropa is also called adhyāsa. In semidarkness, we superimpose a snake on a rope due to the ignorance of the fact that it is a rope. Similarly, we superimpose this world on Brahman due to the ignorance of Its nature. This superimposition is adhyāropa.

This ignorance, technically called ajñāna or avidyā, is neither 'sat' (real) nor 'asat' (unreal) nor even 'sat-asat' (real-unreal). It is impossible to define it, though it is a fact of experience. Hence it is termed 'anirvacanīya' (indefinable). This ajñāna comprises three guṇas (qualities) called sattva, rajas and tamas. Also, it is jñānavirodhī (opposed to knowledge) and bhāvarūpa (positive).

This ajñāna has two powers: āvaraṇa (concealment) and vikṣepa (projection). Semidarkness conceals the real nature of the rope and makes it appear like a snake. Similarly, the āvaraṇa-śakti of ajñāna conceals the real nature of Brahman. Its vikṣepa-śakti projects the world appearance in the same.

The three aspects of the jīvātman (individual self) viz., viśva, taijasa and prājña; the three bodies—sthūla, sūkṣma and kāraṇa; the five kośas (sheaths)—annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, vijñānamaya and ānandamaya; the three forms of Paramātman, viz., Īśvara, Hiraṇyagarbha and Virāṭ; the fourteen worlds beginning with bhū; the bodies of the beings that inhabit them and the five elements that are their causes—all these are the products of ajñāna, the effect of its vikṣepa-śakti!

Through right perception, under the right circumstances, the snake is sublated and its substratum, the rope, is seen as it is. Similarly, when through pramāṇa (right means of knowledge), yukti (logic) and anubhava (experience) the world which is being

perceived in Brahman through ajñāna is sublated and its substratum Brahman is seen as It is, the method followed in doing so, is called apavāda or de-superimposition.

Brahman appears to evolve into this world, as described in the Upaniṣads, in a particular order. In nididhyāsana one should meditate on this in the reverse direction and dissolve the world into Brahman. Then Brahman alone remains and the world totally disappears.

The most important fact that emerges out of this apavāda is that the jīva and Īśvara are the same in essence. It is exactly this that the mahāvākyas (Great Sentences) of the Upaniṣads declare. Among these, the sentences *tat tvam asi* ('That thou art') and *aham brahma asmi* ('I am Brahman') have been described and commented upon in great detail in the Vedāntic works. Incidentally, the first sentence is called upadeśa-vākya ('the sentence of teaching'); and the latter, anubhava-vākya ('the sentence of experience'). In this work *Vedāntasāra,* the method by which *tat tvam asi* is to be interpreted has been depicted in great detail.

As already described, the literal meaning of the sentence; *tat tvam asi*, is 'That thou art;' i.e., Īśvara, and jīva are the same, or identical. Since Īśvara, the Lord, and jīva, the individual soul, are poles apart, they can never be equal or identical in the literal sense. But the Vedāntic sentence is our supreme

authority in all supramundane matters. Hence we have to interpret this sentence not directly or literally but indirectly or by implication. Among several such implications called lakṣaṇas, the particular one known as bhāga-lakṣaṇā, (in which there is partial acceptance of the literal meaning, the rest being decided by implication) is adopted here for this purpose. "So'yam devadattaḥ", 'He is that Devadatta'—this is the oft-quoted example to prove the point.

If the Devadatta whom we saw yesterday at the market in a Western dress comes to our house this morning in Indian dress, we immediately recognize him as 'This is that Devadatta.' The person 'Devadatta' is accepted, rejecting the two different times, places, dresses and other accidental characteristics which are not the real aspects of the person. Similarly, in the sentence *tat tvam asi*, we should reject the accidental characteristics of Īśvara and the jīva (Īśvara is omnipotent and omniscient whereas the knowledge and powers of the jīva are very limited) and accept only the fact that both are caitanya, or pure consciousness, which is the essential characteristic of both. It is only then that they can be termed 'identical.' The unity and identity of the two should be accepted only in this sense.

This identity has to be experienced and for this the aspirant has to perform sādhanā. In this scheme of sādhanā, śravaṇa comes first. Śravaṇa does not mean merely 'hearing.' It is listening attentively to

the teachings of the Upaniṣads from the guru, and determining their correct meaning as per six liṅgas or rules of understanding, like upakrama (beginning), upasaṁhāra (conclusion) and so on. What has been understood thus should then be subjected to manana, intensive thinking, to dispel all possible doubts and to sustain it thoroughly through reason and logic. Once this manana becomes ripe it leads to nididdhyāsana or meditation on the nature of the Ātman/Brahman principle which has been the ultimate conclusion of śravaṇa and manana. The mind assumes the form of Brahman and flows on continuously. This is called brahmākāravṛtti. When this nididhyāsana ripens, it results in samādhi, total absorption, giving superconscious experience.

Samādhi is of two types: savikalpaka (with modifications) and nirvikalpaka (without modifications). In the former, along with the perception of Brahman there is also an awareness of oneself and the awareness of the process of contemplation. It is similar to the dual consciousness involved in seeing a clay elephant wherein there is a simultaneous awareness of clay as well as the elephant. In the latter, there is the experience of Brahman only, the other two aspects of awareness (of oneself and of the process of contemplation) being transcended.

To attain such nirvikalpaka samādhi, it is necessary to undergo the eight steps of Yoga viz., yama (general discipline), niyama (particular

discipline), āsana (posture), prāṇāyāma (control of vital force), pratyāhāra (self-withdrawal), dhāraṇā (concentration), dhyāna (meditation) and samādhi (total absorption). They will ultimately lead to the realization of Brahman.

Prārabdha (the residual karma that is responsible for this body in this birth) can be exhausted only through its experience. Hence if one gets realization of Brahman before death, then he attains the state called jīvanmukti (liberation while living). In this state, though he has his body and the sense-organs, he does not have the sense of identification with them. Nor does he experience pleasure and pain through them as the ignorant do. The experience of Brahman is, of course, never interrupted. All the great and noble virtues come to him naturally and adorn him like ornaments.

Once the prārabdha gets exhausted, the body falls. Since ajñāna and its effects have already been destroyed, he becomes one with Brahman and never again returns to this mundane existence. This is termed 'videhamukti.'

CHARTS

Table 1 : Vedānta

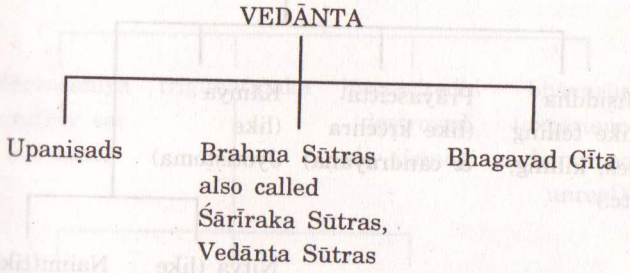


Table 2 : (a) Anubandha-catuṣṭaya

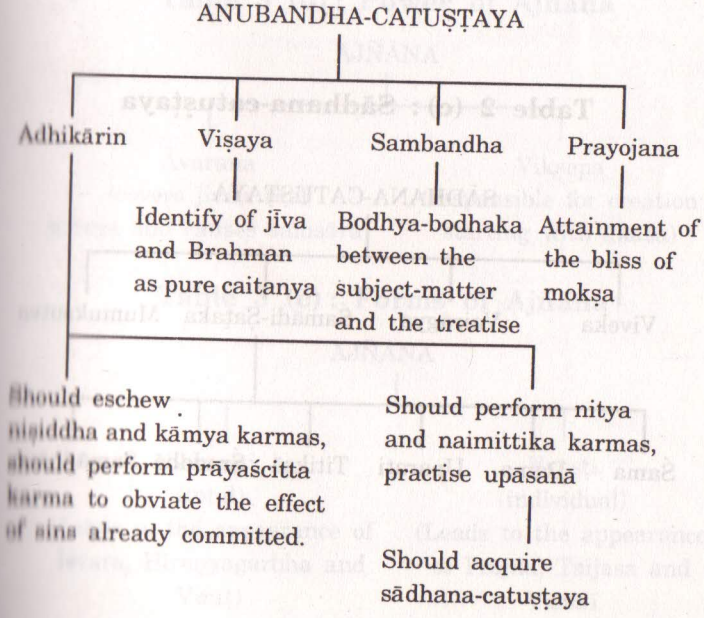


Table 2 (b): Varieties of Karma:

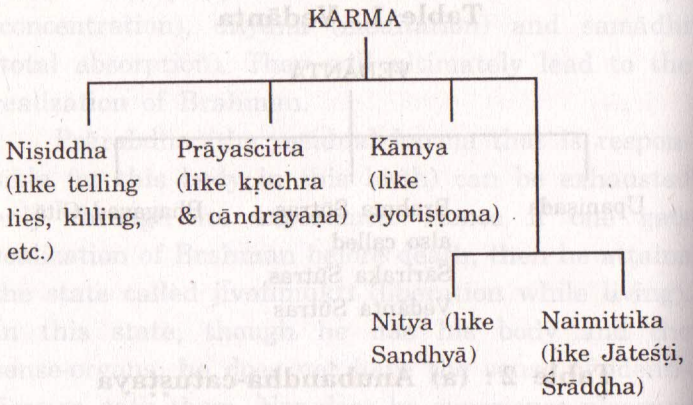


Table 2 (c): Sādhana-catuṣṭaya

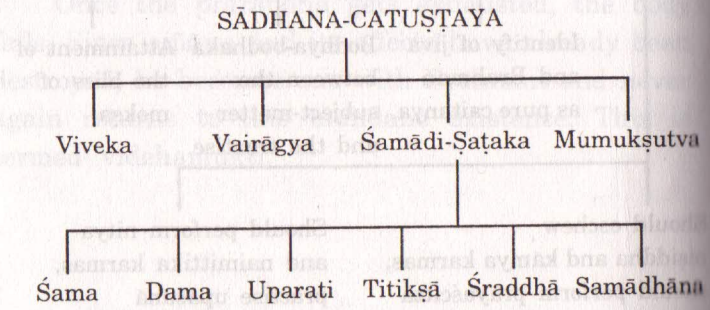


Table 3 (a): Description of Ajñāna

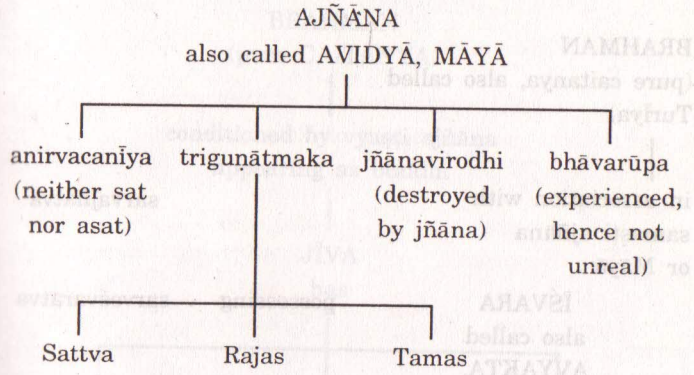


Table 3 (b): Power of Ajñāna

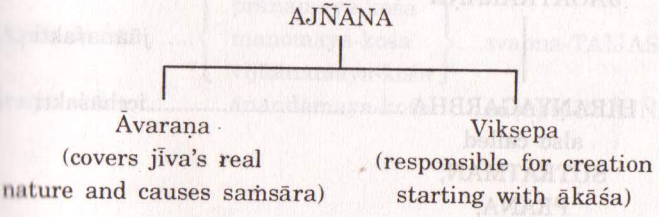


Table 3 (c): Forms of Ajñāna

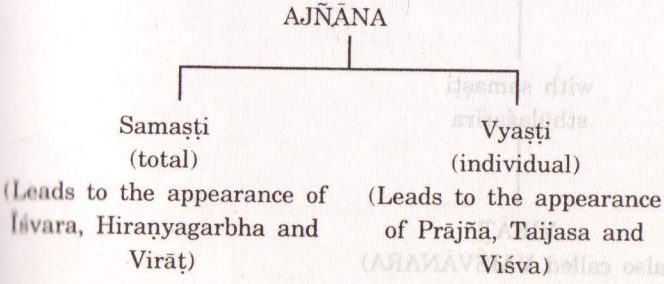


Table 4: Brahman and Its Aspects

BRAHMAN
(pure caitanya, also called Turīya)

in association with samaṣṭi ajñāna or Māyā — sarvajñatva

ĪŚVARA, also called AVYAKTA, ANTARYĀMIN and JAGATKĀRAṆA — possessing — sarveśvaratva

sarvaniyantṛtva

jñānaśakti

HIRAṆYAGARBHA, also called SŪTRĀTMAN, PRĀṆA, CATURMUKHABRAHMĀ PRAJĀPATI — icchāśakti

kriyāśakti

with samaṣṭi sthūlaśarīra

VIRĀṬ
(also called VAIŚVĀNARA)

Table 5: The Jīva

BRAHMAN
(pure CAITANYA)

conditioned by vyaṣṭi ajñāna appearing as buddhi

JĪVA has

three śarīras	five kośas	three avasthās
sthūla śarīra	annamaya kośa	jāgrat-VIŚVA
sūkṣma śarīra	prāṇamaya-kośa, manomaya-kośa, vijñānamaya-kośa	svapna-TAIJASĀ
kāraṇa śarīra	ānandamaya-kośa	suṣupti-PRĀJÑA

Table 6 (a): CREATION

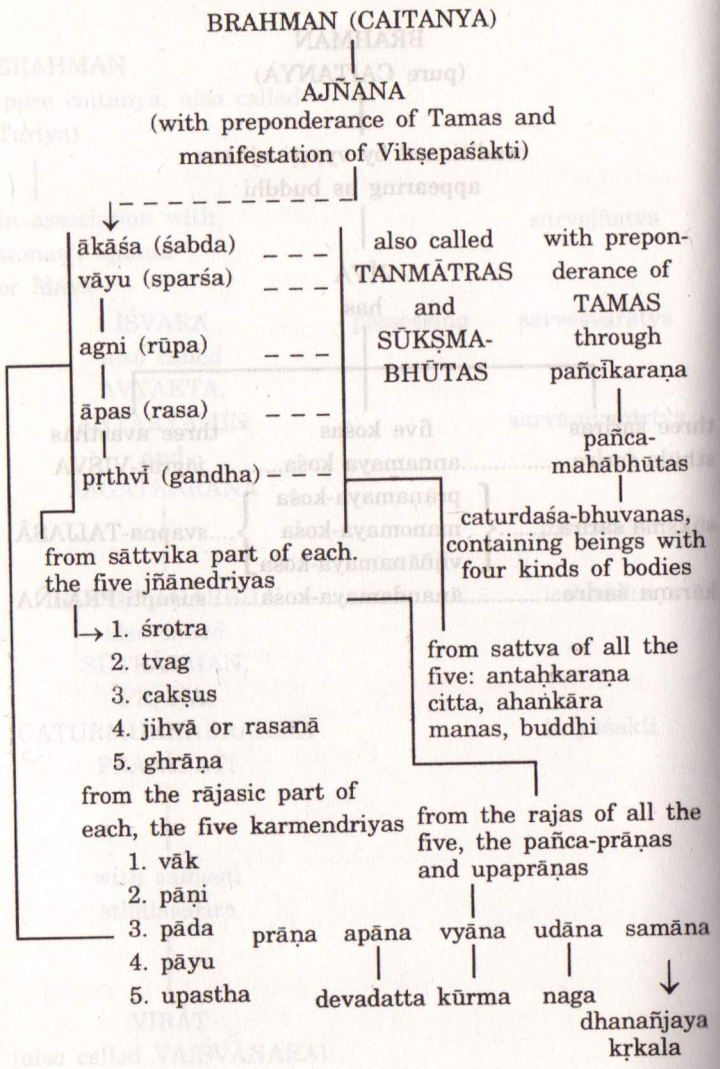


Table 6 (b): Pañcīkaraṇa

Each mahābhūta or sthūlabhūta = 1/2 respective tanmātra + 1/8 four tanmātras

e.g., pṛthvī-bhūta = 1/2 gandha-tanmātra or sūkṣma-pṛthvī + 1/8 sūkṣma ākāśa + 1/8 sūkṣma vāyu + 1/8 sūkṣma agni + 1/8 sūkṣma āpas

Table 6 (c): Caturdaśa Bhuvanas (14 worlds)

atala, vitala, sutala, rasātala, talātala, mahātala, pātala—BELOW the earth.

bhū—earth

bhuvar, svar, mahar, jana, tapas, satyam—ABOVE the earth

Table 6 (d): Bodies

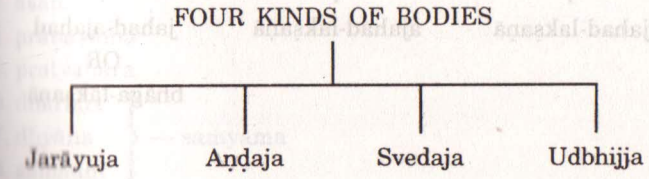


Table 7 : Mahāvākyas

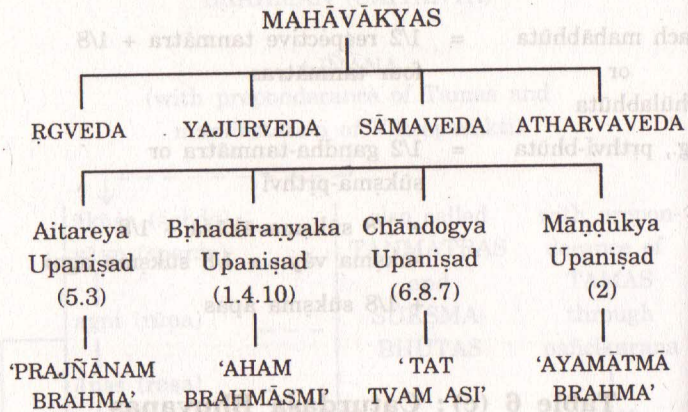


Table 8 : Meaning of Sentence

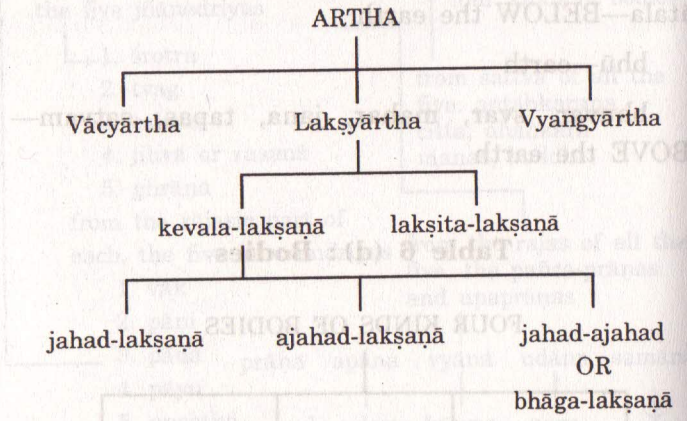


Table 9 : Sādhanās

SĀDHANĀ

Cittaśuddhi by avoiding niṣiddha and kāmya karmas, performing prāyaśittas and nitya-naimittika karmas and acquiring

SĀDHANA-CATUṢṬAYA

gurūpasadana, upadeśa

śravana

determining the meaning of śrutis through ṣaḍvidha liṅgas, viz., upakrama-upasaṁhāra, abhyāsa, apūrvatā, phala, arthavāda, upapatti.

manana

(through śruti-anugṛhīta-tarka)

nididhyāsana

SAMĀDHI

SAVIKALPAKA NIRVIKALPAKA

aṅgas

1. yama–ahiṁsā, satya, asteya, brahmacarya, aparigraha
2. niyama–śauca, santoṣa, tapas, svādhyāya, īśvarapraṇidhāna
3. āsana
4. prāṇāyāma
5. pratyāhāra
6. dhāraṇā
7. dhyāna
8. samādhi

— saṁyama

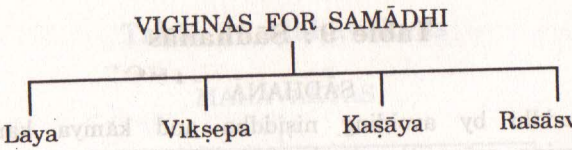
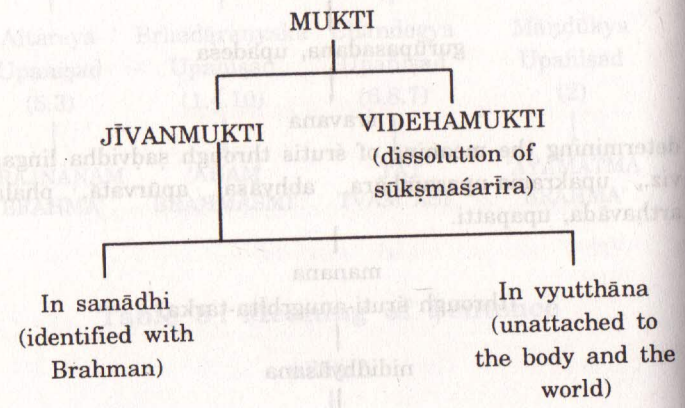


Table 10 : Mukti



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